

الله
رسول
محمد

THE RELIGION OF THE IGNORANT

Do they then seek the judgment of
the Time of Ignorance? Who could be
better at giving judgment than Allah
for people with certainty?

(Surat al-Ma'ida, 50)

HARUN YAHYA

Without their knowing, a false religion has brought the great majority of people under its sway. This hidden religion never reveals itself openly. It has no written commandments, but it controls people's behavior, attitudes and thoughts. People unconsciously implement its rules throughout their lives, and live by its exhortations and prohibitions.

When asked, many people who abide by this religion may well describe themselves as Muslims or Christians or Jews. They may even be atheists. But nevertheless, all are actually members of this secret belief system.

This religion never presents itself to people as a unified whole. They adopt it involuntarily, as the result of the lengthy indoctrination that begins from the moment they are born. They are therefore unaware that it affects their behavior, thoughts, and even their body language.

To its adherents, this religion portrays its goal as becoming a respected person. To do so means adopting the value judgments of this religion, implementing its laws, prohibitions and forms of behavior, and assuming its character traits. To be respected is essential to achieve a specific accepted station in society, and not considered an eccentric, out of the ordinary.

This is the Religion of the Ignorant.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in Allah, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality for they focus on one objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of Allah and His unity and to live by the values He prescribed for them.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



TO THE READER

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning Allah's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of Allah. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

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October, 2006

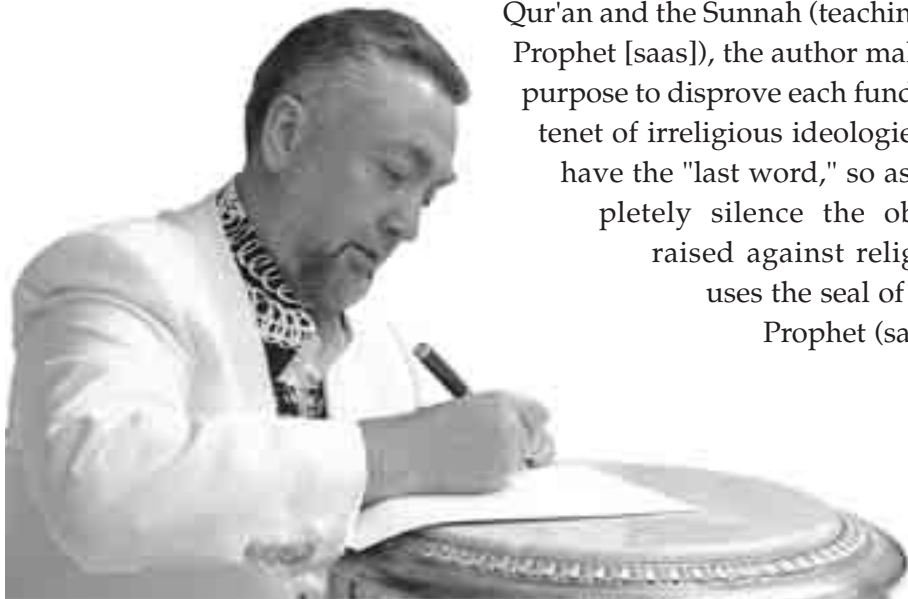
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Now writing under the pen-name of HARUN YAHYA, he was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, he has published many books on political, scientific, and faith-related issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as the author of important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, their invalid claims, and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and such bloody ideologies as fascism and communism.

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 57 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 45,000 pages with 30,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saas), last of

the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet [saas]), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of irreligious ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet (saas), who



attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as Allah's existence and unity and the Hereafter; and to expose irreligious systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, Spain to Brazil, Malaysia to Italy, France to Bulgaria and Russia. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Swahili, Hausa, Dhivehi (spoken in Mauritius), Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, Indonesian, Bengali, Danish and Swedish.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in Allah and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for Allah's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

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Abbreviations used:
(*saas-sall-Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to Prophet Muhammad)
(*as- 'alayhi's-salam*): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets)

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INTRODUCTION

Without their knowing, a superstitious religion has brought the great majority of people under its sway. This hidden religion never openly reveals itself. It has no written commandments, but it controls people's behavior, attitudes and thoughts. People unconsciously implement this religion's rules throughout their lives, and live by its structures and prohibitions. This religion is not Islam, Christianity or Judaism. When asked, many people who abide by this religion may well describe themselves as Muslims or Christians or Jews. They may even be atheists. But nevertheless, all are actually members of this secret belief system.

This religion never presents itself to people as a unified whole. People adopt it as the result of the steady propaganda they are subjected to from birth. Therefore, they're unaware that their behavior, thoughts, and even body language derive from this religion.

To its adherents, this religion portrays its goal as becoming a respected person. To do so means adopting the value judgments of this religion, implementing its laws, prohibitions and forms of behavior, and assuming its character traits. To be respected is essential to achieve a specific accepted station in society, and not regarded as an eccentric, not out of the ordinary.

This religion is therefore an ignorant one, which is how we'll refer to it for short. Ignorant religion propels people towards insincerity, toward artificial and affected behavior. Adherents of this reli-

gion do not generally behave naturally and spontaneously. They employ modes of behavior, speech and facial expressions in a way they think will be appropriate, and engage in constant role-playing. Yet they imagine that they are living exceedingly natural and normal lives.

This religion produces insincere, artificial human models with false identities. Why does such an evil religion, bringing with it all kinds of trouble and suffering, hold large sections of society under its sway? The most important reason is, as already mentioned, that it lacks any formal name. Adherents of this religion never even think to question, abandon or change it, because they are unaware that the system they live under is actually a religion, and regard it as "the facts," or "the immutable laws of life."

As long as people fail to remedy this situation and turn away from the religion of the ignorant, they cannot properly comprehend and live by Islam, because the fundamental condition of Islam is sincerity and naturalness. A person can live by Islam, and thus achieve true happiness and salvation, only by being uncompromisingly sincere towards Allah, himself and others. Faith can only be built on a foundation of sincerity. In order to free yourself of the effect of the Religion of the Ignorant, that religion must first be identified and defined. That is the aim of this book. The following chapters shall examine the characteristics of Ignorantism in some detail.

The reader's task is to personally weigh and review these characteristics. One may be reluctant to admit it, but the Religion of the Ignorant can exert a definite effect on anyone. Ridding yourself of this dark religion that impacts on every moment of people's lives calls, first and foremost, for close attention and sincerity.

IGNORANTISM VERSUS THE TRUE RELIGION

Asked "What is religion?" our Prophet (saas) replied, "It is the path you are on." His reply wisely summarizes the matter. Religion (*deen*) encapsulates all of a person's values, ethical rules and lifestyle—and thus, those of entire societies. For example, the word *deen* is employed in this sense in Surah Yusuf 76:

He started with their bags before his brother's and then produced it from his brother's bag. In that way We devised a cunning scheme for Yusuf. He could not have held his brother according to the *deen* of the King—only because Allah had willed it so. We raise the rank of anyone We will. Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower. (Surah Yusuf, 76)

Various verses of the Qur'an also revealed that deniers also share a religion: Pharaoh, for example, told his people the following about the Prophet Musa (as):

Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Musa and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your *deen* and bring about corruption in the land." (Surah Ghafir, 26)

Other verses describe how pagans remained loyal to their own religions in the face of the Divine religion brought by the prophet:

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The unbelievers say, "This is a lying

magician. Has he turned all the gods into One God? That is truly astonishing!" Their leaders went off saying, "Carry on as you are! Hold fast to your gods. This is clearly something planned. We have not heard of this in the old religion. This is merely something contrived." (Surah Sâd, 4-7)

As pointed out so far, every human being has a religion. Those who not adhere to the religion of Allah, and even those who describe themselves as atheists, are not totally devoid of religion, but merely adhere to superstitious ones. Some of these "religions" may not presently be described as such, though that is exactly what they all are—as is revealed in the Qur'an. Marxism, for instance, is in one sense a religion, because that ideology is the "path" down which millions of people have gone. Marxists adopt the intellectual system developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and accept their way of thinking. They analyze the world by means of the standards that they set out. They account for their own existence and the meaning of death based on the logic of Marx and Engels. In short, as believers in Marxism, they shape their lives and evaluate events accordingly.

Besides Marxism, there are hundreds of other different religions, philosophies, and intellectual systems. All these are superstitious religions, basically produced in order to turn people away from the path of Allah.

The point that really needs to be emphasized is that whatever their ideology, philosophy or world view, those who have turned their backs on the true religion still share one common belief system: That is the "religion of the ignorant" that gives this book its name and whose outlines we have briefly sketched. It is also the most cunning and effective weapon wielded by satan in his endeavors to turn humans from the true path.

TO BE A "FINE" MAN

"Be smart!" "That wouldn't have happened if you had used your head!"

You must have heard those words countless times during your life: especially during childhood, when you said or did something your elders didn't agree with or didn't want you to do again.

For someone who utters these words, being a *fine* person is more important than anything. That means adhering to the morals, culture, attitudes and behavior generally accepted by the great majority in society, and conforming to a certain system of values, models and rules deemed acceptable. This is adopted and implemented in society. It's difficult to initiate any debate on where these models and rules originated and whether they're correct. Their inconsistencies cannot be questioned easily, because to question values adopted by the majority risks contradicting masses of people and becoming the target of their hostile reactions.

This structure, whose rightness is so firmly believed in, is not peculiar to our own society alone. The system is practiced in the East as well as in the West, and maintains itself in widely different cultures as a particular system of beliefs and values with its own prohibitions, sanctions and recommendations—just like a religion.

The concepts of Ignorantism are directly opposed to being a Muslim, believing in Allah, having proper moral values, and even being human. This religion definitely leaves no room for the behav-

ior and moral values described by Allah in the Qur'an. Indeed, the religion of the ignorant emerges and grows wherever people do not live by the moral values of the Qur'an. People who are admired and regarded as prominent have learned this religion very well, and implement all its rules.

It's useful to emphasize the basic moral values recommended in the Qur'an that totally conflict with the corrupt logic of Ignorantism. It is revealed in the Qur'an that all people have a responsibility to Allah. A human being is therefore charged with pleasing Allah alone, and must not seek others' approval. A believer who lives by the moral values of the Qur'an thinks and lives according to these verses:

Is Allah not enough for His servant? Yet they try to scare you with others apart from Him. (Surat az-Zumar, 36)

... your Lord is a sufficient guide and helper. (Surat al-Furqan, 31)

A believer's entire life is directed towards being able to please Allah. This is the core of religion. The Qur'an reveals that the characteristic of this true religion that has come down to the present day from the Prophet Ibrahim (as), is the dedication of all one's life to Allah:

Say: "My Lord has guided me to a straight path, a well-founded, the religion of Ibrahim, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the associaters." Say: "My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat al-An'am, 161-162)

Holding Allah's approval as the fundamental objective in life doubtless alters one's relationships with others. As set out above, a person has no mutual responsibility towards others. However, Allah has revealed in the Qur'an how other people should be treated, and

responsibility to Allah ensures that others must be treated in the most just, the most correct and the most honest way. This perspective of believers is described in these terms:

They fulfill their vows and fear a Day whose evil will spread far and wide. They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives: "We feed you only out of desire for the Face of Allah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks. Truly We fear from our Lord a glowering, calamitous Day." (Surat al-Insan, 7-10)

As can be seen from these verses, believers expect nothing from other people, which detachment endows them with a very strong and healthy character. The believer treats everyone correctly under all circumstances, and thus fulfils Allah's commandments. He neither hopes for other people's approval nor fears their criticism. Indeed, in the Qur'an Allah has described believers as not fearing **"the blame of any censurer"** (Surat al-Ma'ida, 54). Therefore, a believer's character and attitude never change in the face of events and other people's approval. He never becomes arrogant because of any rank or station given him, nor ever despairs in the face of difficulties. This stable character of believers frequently draws attention, and their attitudes remain the same when they obtain great wealth or power, as well as in the face of difficulty and poverty. The believer knows that every blessing he enjoys of wealth, power, or rank; or every difficulty he encounters such as condemnation and attack by others, exile, suffering poverty, and imprisonment—all these come from Allah, and all these are *trials* to test him and teach him.

In contrast to believers, adherents of Ignorantism change their attitudes and characters in the face of events and other people. To put it another way, the Religion of the Ignorant is relative and circumstantial. It requires different behavior in the face of different cir-

cumstances. In this religion, the concepts of sincerity and naturalness have no place. According to this belief, everyone needs to exhibit different behavior according to the individual's gender, age and status in society.

Women must conform to the roles set out for them, as do men and children. A student must behave according to the rules of Ignorantism which impinge on students. Similar rules apply to civil servants, doctors, teachers and laborers. Adherents of the religion of the ignorant acquire their identity from the status they possess in society, and behave in the light of the requirements of that identity. In the case of believers, on the other hand, their faith shapes their identity and, as already stated, society's attitude towards their status has no effect on that identity.

One's ethical and personal identity is automatically instilled in those raised in a society of the Religion of the Ignorant, and they immediately begin to practice the rules of that religion. The way to obtain a place and be superior in such a society is to adopt such attitudes and behavior.

The following chapters shall examine the character, behavior and modes of speech taught to people according to their circumstances—their surroundings, age, social and cultural situations and gender, their personal preferences and psychologies. You will see that these are far removed from the ideal forms of behavior and personal and ethical structure described in the Qur'an. In this way, it will be made plain how satan's ignorant superstitious religion dominates those people who live far removed from Islam, at all periods of their lives.

THE COMMON PSYCHOLOGY AND FORMS OF BEHAVIOR IN IGNORANTISM

The philosophy of life and rules of Ignorantism stem from belief that is the exact opposite of the Qur'an's moral values. This mentality dominates a person's entire life and society regards it as natural. Attitudes and behavior described as models of poor moral values in many places in the Qur'an are usually accepted as legitimate and applicable by those who live by the Religion of the Ignorant.

This religion is a lifestyle wherein formalism rules. Society possesses a number of rules inherited from its forebears. In unbelieving societies, its adherents say, "**... We found our fathers following a religion and we are simply following in their footsteps**" (Surat az-Zukhruf, 23). They preserved these rules almost as if they were Divine laws.

It's not at all easy to step outside these laws' boundaries. Everything is done according to these predetermined rules, from ways of eating to the time people go to bed, from ways of displaying love and affection to welcoming guests. Everyone who selects this religion and wants to progress within it is obliged to adopt a style and attitude that the great majority approves of. Indeed, the expert manifestation of these attitudes is regarded as a measure of superi-

ority. Choices are made not for the sake of Allah but according to the rules and measures set out by the religion of the ignorant. Among adherents of Ignorantism, this distorted mentality leads to wide-ranging defects of character and behavior. Below are some of the most important.

1- AFFECTED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Instead of the sincerity, naturalness and authenticity found in Islam, the Religion of the Ignorant contains artificial attitudes and behaviors, far distant from sincerity. Specially adjusted, they gradually become a part and parcel of the individual's character.

As a result of his distorted mindset, an adherent of Ignorantism quickly reveals himself with the artificial behavior and gestures of his insincere style. Each of these artificial attitudes and forms of behavior is intended toward a particular end, such as communicating a message, attracting attention, showing off, or furthering personal interests.

Communicating Messages

In the Religion of the Ignorant, the expression of emotions is generally based not on speech, but on looks and behavior. Individuals cannot reconcile the open expression of many emotions with their own self-esteem. They therefore express emotions indirectly, through their actions and behavior. Such behavioral defects constitute the basic identity structure of adherents of Ignorantism. "Uncomfortable" feelings such as anger, irritation, envy, desire and admiration are often expressed indirectly.

Slamming the door, casting hostile looks, continuing on one's way without replying, and speaking in a growl to make their anger apparent are some of the means resorted to by adherents of the

Religion of the Ignorant. They generally prefer indirect modes of expression to any open and sincere style.

In contrast to the nobility in Islam, coarseness is the dominant theme in Ignorantism. Silent protests, such as turning away in anger during arguments among friends, refusing to speak, suddenly turning one's back and storming out, sulking for protracted periods of time, deliberately not laughing at comical things, or wearing down the opposing side by refusing to answer or giving curt and abrupt responses are just a few of these vulgar, banal forms of behavior.

Giving Oneself Airs and Belittling Others

Adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant constantly seek to establish superiority over one another, and do everything they can to put others down, because they imagine they can rise to the top only by pushing others down.

Workplace supervisors or people of high rank generally use behavior such as appearing irritable and abrupt, or giving the impression that they are very busy and have no time for their own subordinates. Engaging in behavior that makes it clear one has no respect for others is regarded as quite justifiable in Ignorantism. One way of belittling other people in this religion is to address only certain individuals in a group, to look only at them and to ignore everyone else. Another device frequently employed is to address everyone around but the person whom one does not want to appear to be dealing with directly, even though one knows that he is interested in that particular subject.

Continuing to do what one was busy doing while another is talking, displaying as little interest as possible by refusing to look at someone who is talking, or deliberately avoiding to answer a question even though one has clearly heard it, are seen as signs of strong

personality in Ignorantism. Appearing to have risen above certain things is seen as one way of attaining superiority. As a means of belittlement, the appearance of being uninterested is scrupulously adopted in all walks of life. For instance, it's very important to be the one who's greeted first. Great care is taken to ensure the other person utters the first "Hello!". Ignoring a greeting is another oft-used method of belittling another. Yet the moral criterion revealed in the Qur'an is quite different:

When you are greeted with a greeting, return the greeting or improve on it. Allah takes account of everything. (Surat an-Nisa', 86)

Seeking to achieve superiority over others by means of artificial actions and behavior, and to conceal one's own flaws and deficiencies, are defects seen in those who lack full belief in Allah and the Hereafter. Believers trust only in Allah and fear nothing but Him, but adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant, who fail to appreciate Allah as is due, live in a constant state of fear, insecurity, restlessness and flawed identity. Being humiliated in front of others, being left behind or ignored, all represent major problems for such people. They, therefore, develop an internal defense mechanism, which constitutes one of their major weaknesses. In order to conceal that weakness in society, they generally act from the logic of "An attack is the best form of defense."

Attracting Attention

To attract attention, to make one's presence felt or to prove oneself in a group environment, the most obvious of the artificial behavior and attitudes resorted to are:

Seeking to appear different and to give oneself a unique air by engaging in inappropriate behavior,

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Adopting a heavy and serious air in a happy environment,
speaking little,

Engaging in frivolous activities in situations where concentration is required,

Reacting more than is appropriate or else exhibiting an inappropriate lack of reaction,

Behaving as if one were very calm when in fact one has a storm raging inside,

Engaging in sudden changes of meaningless behavior, such as turning serious in the middle of laughter,

Starting to behave exuberantly from having been very calm, or emitting sudden guffaws of laughter,

Suddenly moving from normal speech patterns to exaggerated ones—raising one's tone of voice for example, or starting to speak in an excessively low voice; giving the same impression simultaneously by one's facial expression or gestures,

Showing off by means of adopting unusual postures,

Refusing to behave warmly until someone else has taken an interest in one,

Ignoring those who do take an interest in one, looking down one's nose at people,

Seeking to be useful to or attract the attention of those who ignore, belittle or look down their noses at one,

Giving the impression one is very busy,

Giving the impression of being distracted or worried,

Deliberately making mistakes or causing a scene,

Describing an event one did not witness as though one actually had...

The above displays are based on role playing. Some examples are:

Behaving as though one were surprised, angered or pleased, even though that is not actually the case, and to imply this, using the appropriate facial expressions—raising one's eyebrows, frowning, glaring, looking askance, pursing the lips and eyes; embracing protest behavior, or adopting an opposite position even when one actually shares a particular idea; refusing to speak about certain attributes, even though one actually possesses them, and waiting for others to bring up the subject; engaging in false modesty when these subjects are raised, so as to give the impression that one has other latent superior features that one hesitates to mention out of a sense of modesty.

Observing One's Own Interests

By engaging in insincere behavior, people hope to obtain various advantages. Seeking to appear pleasant to someone one does not like but who can serve one's interests, acting sycophantically and seeking to attract a person's notice at every opportunity, trying to make oneself popular, displaying false loyalty to and respect for one's employer or superior but immediately turning disloyal as soon as circumstances change—these are all normal forms of behavior in adherents of Ignorantism.

Failing to tell the truth one knows in hopes of acquiring an advantage or out of fear or hesitation; and glossing over the subject with talk of democracy and the like, are other examples of such behavior.

Showing Off

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and

children: like the plant-growth after rain which delights the cultivators, but then it withers and you see it turning yellow, and then it becomes broken stubble. In the Hereafter there is terrible punishment but also forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

The above verse emphasizes how boasting and display, major characteristics of the Religion of the Ignorant, are widespread among people. In Islam, the greatest aim in life is to gain the approval of Allah, whereas in the Ignorantism, the greatest aim is to attain that of other people. In the Religion of the Ignorant, display is therefore of vital importance. Being liked, admired, approved of or envied is more important than anything else. In this religion people dress, speak, decorate their homes, or choose professions to impress those around them. Their greatest aim in everything they do is to gain others' approval. When they go to a bookshop, for instance, they look at the bestsellers rather than at books about the subjects that actually interest them. When choosing a book they wonder which will be most "cool" and in line with current fashion, because their aim is not to advance their experiences, knowledge or personality, but to have something to tell others about.

In raising their children, a great many people take pains to ensure that their children acquire attributes that those around them approve of, whether these be right or wrong, rather than trying to help them become patient, tolerant, devout, compassionate or generous. For example, they send their children to the most prestigious schools, hire piano teachers even though their children have no talent, allow children to call them by their first names in order to show off to their friends that raising an arrogant child is perfectly accept-

able. In Ignorantism, a child is an important opportunity for display. For the sake of the parents' prestige among their acquaintances, it is most important for their child to study at a good school, know various foreign languages, to dress attractively, be popular and have many talents. Indeed, when adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant speak, parents prefer to discuss things that will be the subject of other people's envy, rather than how modest, how affectionate or how gentle their children are. They are more interested in appearances than in their children's moral values.

Another element of display lies in having a dashing home. Rather than considering their own comfort, people attach more importance to the opinion of those around them. Which area is it located in? How many floors does it have? The kind of view it affords and the amount of floor space available will increase their own prestige. They furnish and decorate entirely in the light of other people's opinions. Even if they prefer another color, they opt for the one in fashion at the time. They buy exceedingly uncomfortable furniture just because it is expensive and showy, and put up with styles of décor they thoroughly dislike just to be able to say that such-and-such a designer carried out the work. Though they spend much of their time in that home, they never enter the drawing room except when they have guests, on the grounds that having spent so much money on it, they want "to keep it pristine." They cover up the furniture and sit in a tiny room somewhere else. In short, they set aside half their home for show and half for living in.

Boasting is such an intense passion for people that they seek to show off even to those closest to them. One of the best places to do that is at parties. They issue invitations not because they actually want to see their guests, but simply to show off. They prepare every little detail for the party with that in mind. They select the food not

for its taste, but for its ability to display their wealth. Their objective is not for their guests to enjoy the party, but to envy the amount of money spent on it. At such dinner parties, everyone looks at everyone else's clothes, shoes and handbags, and the jewelry and perfumes people are wearing.

At such parties, the conversation is a kind of "show-off" competition, wherein everyone seeks to prove himself on some subject. Women seek to put down other women by discussing their trips abroad, the beauty of a country they visited, the difficulties in finding good domestic staff, the make of clothes they have bought, their hairdressers, and the jewelry they have ordered. Men, on the other hand, talk about their successes in the business arena, their network of contacts, commenting on economic or political matters as if they were experts on the subject. Any sincerity, warmth or friendship is therefore impossible in conversations in Ignorantism. Indeed, such guests, as soon as they leave the gathering, without fail, end the event by criticising those who remain. They discuss the insincerity of the people concerned, their attempts to show off, how boring they were, their hosts' vulgarity, the ugliness of their interior design and the tastelessness of the food. Tired, bored and offended, they leave parties where the Religion of the Ignorant reigns.

Know-It-Alls and Priggery

Anyone following Ignorantism will be far from possessing the reason and sharpness of understanding revealed in the Qur'an. Nevertheless, such people greatly admire their own intellects, imagining themselves as far more intelligent than others. An adherent of the Religion of the Ignorant believes that he has sufficient experience to give anyone advice on any subject whatsoever. Half-absorbed information garnished from all around is fused with the

conclusions drawn from his own experiences, and the individual thus imagines that he or she has acquired a great knowledge of life. Such people then seek to demonstrate that experience at every opportunity. Such attributes as reason, intelligence, moral values and culture are relegated to second place. One of the most important credibility factors here is that of age. This alleged superiority is emphasized in expressions like, "I was doing that while you were still wet behind the ears," or "I have witnessed your childhood."

Even if a person realizes that an idea he's proposed is wrong or that his alleged knowledge of a particular subject is actually limited, it's very rare for him to admit that. Having one's mistakes or errors revealed is unacceptable to members of Ignorantism. In any case the important thing is not to arrive at a conclusion or to determine the truth and the facts, but generally to satisfy one's own need for prestige.

Children brought up in such environments acquire such characteristics from an early age. For example, the offspring of a cultured, intellectual, wealthy family, but one far removed from Islam, will generally become the kind of adults who knows it all, under-value others, and believe themselves constantly in the right and well-informed on every matter. Unless children who assume the appearance of a know-it-all from an early age are given an Islamic education, they will maintain such a character at all times.

Unbalanced Behavior

In the Religion of the Ignorant, the existence of people's eccentricities are seen as interesting and acceptable. While a great many people may actually have quite normal personalities, they engage in unbalanced behavior to obtain prestige and admiration from those around them.

Due to this distorted mindset of Ignorantism, some even risk

their own lives to attract attention. Young people in particular put on irrational displays in order to show off their courage and win their friends' admiration. They drive at irrationally high speeds, and try to overtake the car in front, even on dangerous bends. They play "chicken" by driving towards oncoming traffic and pulling over only at the very last moment. Valuing their own lives and those of others at nothing, they want people to say, "He is insanely brave and isn't even afraid of death." The fact is, though, that he engages in such behavior not because he has lost his fear of death, but because he's fallen under the spell of the Religion of the Ignorant. However, if a young person driving at insane speeds actually has an accident, then that madness on his face will be replaced by an expression of terror. He will begin to pray for help and not to be killed. At that instant, Ignorantism will lose all its power and will be replaced by fear of Allah.

Another way to be feared and thus respected is to pretend from time to time to be unable to control one's anger. The most obvious manifestations of this, as required by the Religion of the Ignorant, are punching the wall when annoyed by something, by cutting one's hand by smashing a window, by covering one's face with both hands while waiting to calm down, or immediately resorting to alcohol. Many people even seek prestige by depicting themselves as half mad by making statements such as "I have a nasty temper," or "I have a dark side, but it doesn't always show."

Many sports that pose a risk to human life are also engaged in for the sake of projecting that image. Even though they fear being crippled, physically harmed or even killed, most people have a tendency towards such sports in order to show off to those around them. Thus Ignorantism manages to force a normally rational person to behave abnormally and to acquire a sick personality.

Feigned Incompetence

The Religion of the Ignorant demands an erroneous belief that the wealthy must be physically incompetent. This is based on the logic that wealthy people hire others to do physical work that involves expending energy. They don't prepare their own meals, for instance, but hire cooks. They do not clean their own homes, but hire staff to do the job.

They do not darn their own torn clothes, nor expend any energy on picking up the pieces up when something breaks on the floor. They give the address to their driver whenever they want to go anywhere and expect him to find the way. They have shops deliver goods to their home rather than go shopping in person. They call a private doctor to visit them at home when they are unwell, and have no idea of the hospital procedures. If their cars break down, have a flat tire, they delegate to their hired staff the task of putting matters right. These attitudes are all peculiar to the rich. These people have grown accustomed to support from others, and never feel the need to acquire any skills themselves.

This mentality leads many perfectly competent people to feign helplessness in order show off by giving the impression of great wealth. For that reason, giving the impression that one has never developed any abilities is particularly prevalent among women. That is the logic behind a young girl telling her friends, "I can't even boil an egg. I can't remember ever going into the kitchen to make something to eat. I've never sewn anything or even threaded a needle," though she knows how to do these things perfectly well. Such people seek to give the impression of being accustomed to having others do everything for them.

Being Difficult to Please

Why does someone dislike an object and regard it as worthless? Someone living in a mansion, for instance, may not like an apartment and may criticize the décor. Yet an apartment block will seem like a palace for anyone who lives in a hovel, under much worse conditions.

Why does a person not admire someone else's intelligence? Because he believes himself to be far more intelligent. Why does a person not enjoy someone else's ideas? Because he has much better ones. Why does a person not value someone else's profession? Because he imagines that he possesses far greater abilities. Not liking things, therefore, generally means that one possesses a better version of them.

Therefore, those who wish to give the impression that they possess the best of everything never much care for anything. Even if they do like something, they never admit it and always try to find some fault to criticize. For example, someone who accompanies friends to a high-class restaurant will always look for something wrong with the food, or the décor, or the behavior of the waiters, even though he has never been to such a high-class restaurant all his life. He will imply that he's eaten in far superior places by offering such criticisms as "I didn't think the food was all that good. The view was very poor, and how did they do such decoration? It was distressing."

Whenever young girls see a more attractive rival, they always look for flaws to emphasize their own superiority. A girl who admires her own hair, if she sees someone with even prettier hair, will make criticisms like "Look at her hair, that style really doesn't suit her, and it looks a bit thin." When a tall girl sees another prettier, but slightly shorter girl, she will immediately seek to belittle her by say-

ing how short she is and how her legs are stumpy.

Due to that mistaken mindset in Ignorantism, you'll never hear anyone praising anyone whom they perceive to be superior, more intelligent, attractive or talented. It is next to impossible to see a newspaper commentator praising other newsmen of roughly the same age, praising them as more intelligent, or saying that their analyses are more accurate than his own. It's equally rare for any artist to esteem another artist whom he regards as enjoying the same standing, or to admit that the other artist is more beautiful and talented. Rather, one generally sees fierce criticism raging between such people. For instance, one psychologist will not like the methods employed by another. A dietician will criticize the methods used by another dietician, and a television presenter will always find something to criticize in his rivals.

2- FLAWED MANNERS OF SPEAKING

Speech helps people express their thoughts and emotions, their wishes and desires, and establish wide-ranging communication with others. In the Religion of the Ignorant, however, speech has become a means whereby the distorted mindset of that religion is revealed to the outside world. When they speak, adherents of Ignorantism reveal all their complexes, personality defects, psychological problems and mental flaws. By means of speech as well as by behavior, most try to give the impression that they are different than what they really are and that they are superior. In this section, we shall consider the speech of adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant in terms of style, content, attitude, and other characteristics.

Artificial and Insincere Speech

Ignorantism is a religion of *patterns*. So long as people imple-

ment these patterns, they are popular and appreciated within society. Patterns of speech occupy an important place in human relations, particularly within this religion. Speech in the Religion of the Ignorant takes place by the most appropriate patterns being selected and used in accordance with prevailing circumstances. Whether the individuals actually mean the words they utter is not relevant at all. Since there is a great difference between what they feel and what they communicate to the outside, members of Ignorantism fit the definition of hypocrites. Although hypocrisy is a source of deep shame for any normal person, those who live according to the Religion of the Ignorant are unaware even that they have fallen into a shameful position.

In Ignorantism, people learn to give the appearance of loving when they actually hate, of being uncaring when they actually love, of being sad when such is not so, of rejoicing when this is untrue, of laughing or crying when doing so is insincere, and of being astonished when they really feel no reaction at all. They also do all these things in light of the prevailing circumstances.

Since the people around them also possess the same mindsets, they see nothing amiss with falsity and insincerity, and regard them as natural. When their turn comes, they don't hesitate to display the same insincerity and false character. Various forms of insincere speech include:

Adopting an exaggerated style to attract greater attention when describing events,

Portraying something banal as something important, and something important as if it were banal,

Making it clear that one knows foreign languages by sprinkling one's speech with foreign words, even when perfectly adequate equivalents in the mother tongue are available,

Behaving as though one had considerable knowledge of the subject being discussed even though one has little actual familiarity with it, and adding something one may have heard about the subject to give the impression that one enjoys a wide mastery,

Displaying artificial and exaggerated reactions even though one is utterly unaffected by the subject under discussion, and uttering words that indicate condemnation, sorrow, agreement or support, even though one actually feels none of these. An example would be using parrot cries like, "I don't believe it!" or "I'm flabbergasted," even though one is not the least bit surprised.

Most of this is not sincerely felt. In fact, the listeners are usually well aware that these words are all false. What matters, however, is for these patterns to be used expertly. Insincerity and hypocrisy have become so normal in the Religion of the Ignorant that even if someone does speak honestly and appears sincere, that is referred to as something extraordinary. In circles that live by Ignorantism, people succeed in society to the extent to which they succeed in hypocrisy. Looking at a great many who have come to be admired in society, you can see their expertise at implementing these rules. Men use insincere speech as a means to further their business careers, and women as a means of showing off among family and acquaintances. Their husbands' positions, how their children are doing at school, their wealth, social relations and activities are all duly exaggerated out of all proportion. The following are examples of insincere speech:

Forced laughter at another person's jokes, because it would seem bold not to, or to play up to that person or to curry an advantage from him, even though one actually finds nothing funny at all; adopting an exaggeratedly arrogant style when angered, and using one's tone of voice to make that irritation apparent.

Hollow and Pointless Speech

In the Religion of the Ignorant, the most distinguishing feature of speech is its hollow, pointless nature. Speaking just for the sake of hearing one's own voice or for absolutely no reason at all has become a habit. Clichéd subjects that cannot possibly lead to any conclusion represent the basis of such conversations, whose subject matter is generally very wide-ranging. Having a chitchat, as it's termed, represents an important part of daily life in Ignorantism. Such conversations usually open using the same, tired formulae, such as "Nowhere else in the world would . . ." or "No other country would ever . . ." or "In the last 24 hours . . ." Then the discourse is enlarged on and expanded by saying, "If I were to rule," "We will never get anywhere," or "I taught them all they know." One of the most popular kinds of speech is aimed at familiar or unfamiliar ideas on all kinds of subjects. Talk of this kind never leads anywhere, and even if it does, never brings any benefit. It generally stems from a desire to give the impression that one possesses ideas, thoughts and thorough analyses.

Fruitless and Unwise Speech

In the Religion of the Ignorant, even subjects that need to be briefly discussed are made complex and irresolvable. Problems that could have been solved in a short time are prolonged for hours. Conversations turn into mutually entrenched positions, stubbornness and personality displays. Business conferences and residency meetings all stage such scenes. Lack of wisdom pervades at all times. It is impossible to express subjects in an intelligent, wise and rational form, because wisdom is a superior attribute that Allah gives only to those of His servants He selects. One verse of the Qur'an reveals that:

He gives wisdom to whoever He wills and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good. But no one pays heed but people of intelligence. (Surat al-Baqara, 269)

Adherents of Ignorantism who lack the reason and wisdom revealed in the Qur'an are unable to explain in minutes, or even hours, a subject that could be summed up in a few sentences. Sometimes they prolong a subject capable of a very swift summary for several minutes, thus enjoying the full flavor of it. On television chat shows, problems that could be dismissed very quickly are debated for hours, with no definite conclusions ever reached. The following is revealed on this subject in the Qur'an:

But there are some people who trade in distracting tales to misguide people from Allah's way knowing nothing about it and to make a mockery of it. Such people will have a humiliating punishment. (Surah Luqman, 6)

In the Religion of the Ignorant, many words are spoken without ever touching on the essence of any subject. Although people speak a lot, they never actually say anything. They make even the simplest subjects very complex by unnecessary verbiage and meaningless connections. They seek to attract attention, to demonstrate the importance of their thoughts and ideas, and to demonstrate their knowledge or culture. Their own personality is raised on even vital issues, while the issue at hand is relegated to the background. To a considerable extent, features described in the Qur'an with the following verse manifest themselves in the speech in the religion of the ignorant:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children... (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

To the above we might also add: everybody speaking at the same time, interrupting others, abandoning a subject halfway and turning to another that one considers to be more important, and involving oneself in every subject, appropriately or not, and whether or not one has any knowledge of it.

Thoughtless Speech

In the Religion of the Ignorant, thoughtlessness frequently manifests itself in conversation. Continuing speaking, unaware that the subject under discussion is of no interest for the listeners, forgetting what one has said and repeating it all over again, describing things that everyone knows as if they were terribly original, and prolonging matters even though everyone's time is limited are the most obvious examples of such thoughtlessness. Inappropriate and unfunny witticisms also reveal speech that's even more lacking in wisdom.

Tactlessness is one form of thoughtless speech. Uttering words that can easily be misunderstood, failing to grasp their implication and committing gaffes as one talks all fall into this category. Although there may generally be no deliberate intention to belittle or mock, offending others by words thoughtlessly uttered is a form of behavior peculiar to Ignorantism. Needlessly bringing up various material or physical flaws of people present, or failing to bear these deficiencies or handicaps in mind, may well offend those individuals. For example, bringing up such inappropriate matters as baldness, short stature, or lack of financial means in the presence of people suffering these afflictions, or making humiliating jokes about them, typify the thoughtlessness particular to the Religion of the Ignorant.

Disrespectful and Mocking Speech

Adopting a stubbornly insistent, argumentative style is another hallmark of Ignorantism. Raising one's voice is a method employed to dominate others and impose one's views on them.

Refusing to address people present, employing such terms as "him over there," addressing a person without looking at him, and interrupting are all ways of belittling the other party. Failing to answer or ignoring questions by pretending one has not heard, in order to give oneself a serious air is another means. Deliberately making someone repeat something one has heard perfectly well, pretending to misunderstand, and starting up a conversation with another person when someone else is speaking, making it clear that one is not listening to them, are other examples of being disrespectful. Mocking speech includes making it clear that one is not interested in what someone else is saying, or despises it by adopting an authoritarian tone.

Speaking on the Telephone

Using a tone or style different from the one usually employed is another feature of the Religion of the Ignorant. Pronouncing "Hello" in different insincere ways according to one's status at the time—such as adopting an ultra-serious tone of voice if one enjoys high rank—is one such example.

Other behaviors to be encountered in Ignorantism when speaking on the telephone include finding the courage to say things that one would hesitate to say in person; sitting anxiously by the phone when waiting for a call from a person one is hoping to benefit from, yet at other times only answering after letting the phone ring for a long time.

Sending silent messages to onlookers by rolling one's eyes

when speaking with someone, using artificial terminology to introduce oneself, slamming down the receiver to make it plain that one is angry, making insincere compliments to the other party and then disparaging or mocking them after hanging up are also peculiar to the Religion of the Ignorant.

Backbiting and Gossip

Surat al-Qalam, verses 10-13, describes the banal and vulgar behavior displayed by members of Ignorantism:

But do not obey any vile swearer of oaths, any backbiter, slandermonger, impeders of good, evil aggressor, gross, coarse and furthermore, despicable. (Surat al-Qalam, 10-13)

The words *backbiter* and *slandermonger* indicate a form of behavior frequently encountered in the Religion of the Ignorant. Adherents of the religion treat people well to their face, and then criticize them behind their backs. Nobody takes any interest in improving people's deficiencies or mistaken ideas. In fact, any need to enlighten others is seldom felt. Any kind of mistake becomes the butt of mockery or gossip.

Gossip, literally a source of entertainment in Ignorantism, occupies an important place in social life. Although one would expect this poor character trait to be criticized and rejected, it is in fact encouraged in society. The Qur'an's message on this subject is as follows:

You who believe! Avoid most suspicion. Indeed some suspicion is a crime. And do not spy and do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat his brother's dead flesh? No, you would hate it. And fear Allah. Allah is Ever-Returning, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Hujurat, 12)

3- MOCKERY

Another common behavioral defect in the Religion of the Ignorant, mockery is openly forbidden in the Qur'an, and it is revealed in one verse just how much it is to be avoided: **"Woe to every scorner and mocker"** (Surat al-Humaza, 1).

In Ignorantism, on the other hand, no rule prevents anyone from mocking and belittling another at the first opportunity. On the contrary, lining up alongside the mocking one is a much more attractive proposition. We may cite the following examples:

Mocking certain people by rolling one's eyes when one is in the company of people one knows well,

Bringing up people's errors, faults and flaws with the intention of disparaging them and subjecting them to ridicule,

Mocking people's physical features, and by referring to their deficiencies or weaknesses sarcastically in terms of enormous praise.

Additionally, disparaging people by means of jokes and barbed comments, or giving them cruel nicknames, belittling people with looks and gestures, imitating them in a manner designed to humiliate them, seeking to put down someone else by means of the style, tone of voice and words one selects, smiling at others in such a way as to draw attention to a flaw in the way they are speaking, and whispering about people so that they cannot hear are all behaviors often displayed in the Religion of the Ignorant.

Other features of Ignorantism are group mockery of a person who makes clumsy mistakes, teasing those known for their innocence or good intentions, looking for something to laugh at in every word uttered, and embarrassing others whom one dislikes or wishes to demean by embracing them in public. The fact is, however, that such behavior is strongly condemned and forbidden in the Qur'an:

You who believe! People should not ridicule others who may be better than themselves; nor should any women ridicule other women who may be better than themselves. And do not find fault with one another or insult each other with derogatory nicknames. How evil it is to have a name for evil conduct after coming to faith! Those people who do not turn from it are wrongdoers. (Surat al-Hujurat, 11)

4- INDIFFERENCE

One fundamental element of the Religion of the Ignorant is the appearance of indifference. In this superstitious religion, indifference is employed to suggest intelligence, ability and personal superiority. It is believed that indifference is the way to give the impression of being someone very special, with a far superior character to anyone else. Indifferent attitudes are therefore prevalent, especially among the young.

Consider the most popular boys or girls in high school. You'll seldom see modest, loving, respectful and sincere behavior in such individuals. Behavioral traits of that kind, the most important features of proper moral values, are regarded as demeaning in Ignorantism. In order to be popular among members of this religion, one should be as arrogant and indifferent as possible. Greeting nobody, but being the one always greeted by others is of the greatest importance in this regard, as is being the person who is shown affection rather than showing it oneself. Such people appear to take no interest in one's surroundings, distancing themselves from anyone who displays a sincere attitude, and are close to only a few favored friends.

A second aspect to indifference manifests itself in the logic of "Don't worry about it," or "That's the way we do things," which in

turn pervades the society of the ignorant. Ignorantism regards keeping one's cool in the face of danger as a virtue. That is why so many people among them die, are crippled or fall ill. One example of this indifference is the way that someone will say, "Don't worry about it, we are not afraid of such things" instead of repairing an electrical cord so worn that it represents a fire hazard. Or the way that residents of an apartment block brush aside a possible danger by saying, "Don't worry about it, this is a strong building nothing will happen" when the plumbing needs fixing. Indeed, most people skip going to the doctor for years under the logic that "I'm as strong as an ox, nothing will happen to me," and feel no need to receive any treatment for their illnesses. Due to this indifference in the Religion of the Ignorant, a very high number of people live for years unaware of the tumors or viruses in their bodies, and are already at death's door by the time these are finally diagnosed.

Another danger indifference brings is the possibility of causing harm to others. Some, for example, will leave a 3-year-old child alone at home, with the idea that nothing will happen. Often people return home to find their children seriously injured from playing with the gas or electricity, or killed by eating medicines or falling out a window. Reports of this kind appear every day in the newspapers. However, at this point the indifference of Ignorantism reveals itself. Reading such reports, people fondly believe that such things could never happen to them, and so carry on in just the same way as before.

Indifference is so prevalent in the society of the ignorant that people are always telling one another not to worry, that nothing untoward will happen. Indeed, thanks to that religion's distorted mindset, people are embarrassed to take precautions in the face of any danger, or even to suggest that others do so. For instance, it's very difficult for workers in a plant with no sprinkler system to sug-

gest that the necessary apparatus be brought in, or to request that the elevator be modernized. In all likelihood, others at that plant will treat those making such requests as cowardly. In fact, though, the consequences of indifference resulting from the "show everyone what you are made of" mindset are generally harmful to the individuals involved.

One very important point to emphasize is that of course, excessive panic or sudden loss of control are undesirable forms of behavior in the face of danger. In the Qur'an, Allah commands people to be submissive, to place their trust in and rely on Him when facing times of danger. Some verses on this subject read:

The believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, whose faith is increased when His signs are recited to them, and who put their trust in their Lord. (Surat al-Anfal, 2)

Say: "Nothing can happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Master. It is in Allah that the believers should put their trust." (Surat at-Tawba, 51)

... Whoever puts his trust in Allah—He will be enough for him. Allah always achieves His aim. Allah has appointed a measure for all things. (Surat at-Talaq, 3)

He [Ya'qub] said, "My sons! You must not enter through a single gate. Go in through different gates. But I cannot save you from Allah at all, for judgment comes from no one but Allah. In Him I put my trust, and let all those who put their trust, put it in Him alone." (Surah Yusuf, 67)

As can be seen in the above verses, the Prophet Ya'qub (as) advises his children to be submissive, but also reminds them to take precautionary measures in what they do. That is the behavior required of a sincere Muslim. Neither the indifference required by the

Religion of the Ignorant nor lack of submission—which Allah has revealed to be displeasing to Him—are proper forms of behavior. People must use their intelligence and take precautions against any perceived threat, and must also submit to our Lord in the knowledge that no danger can be overcome unless He so wishes.

5- CRUELTY

Ignorantism brings with it an exceedingly ruthless and inhumane attitude, such that the great majority are exceedingly thoughtless and lack compassion for those around them. For that reason, people become depressed, offended, and upset many times each day. Because of the cruelty of the Religion of the Ignorant, their lives are full of tension, distress and suffering. Even people known for being extroverted and joyful spend hours weeping when they go to bed. They suffer enormous pain, because Ignorantism completely dominates society in general and it is exceedingly difficult for adherents to put up with the behavior and gestures that this religion brings with it, even if they do exactly the same themselves.

Consider, for example, someone whose financial situation compels him to wear the same clothes to work every day. That causes him considerable distress, because other people will inevitably talk, attach little value to him, and mock him with thoughtless comments along the lines of "Haven't you anything else to wear?"

It is most troubling to know that in a workplace, school, or anywhere within a community are people who talk behind others' backs. People inevitably come to hear what has been said about them and feel great distress as a result.

People manage to distress each other by very clever methods in the Religion of the Ignorant. For example, telling someone wearing a new outfit, "It's great, but it doesn't really suit you. The one you

wore yesterday was more you," is generally done for the purpose of disparaging the other party. There is no room for praise, compliments or references to beauty in Ignorantism. Therefore, people do not praise one another's attributes. Telling someone with a new hair-do, even though one may actually like it, that, "The other style suited you more" is the kind of barb employed in the Religion of the Ignorant. Finding some flaw in every thing of beauty and speaking about what is flawed rather than what is attractive is a rule in Ignorantism. A requirement of this rule is to avoid praising an attractive person by saying things like, "She's pretty, but I've seen prettier," or, "She's pretty, but her dress lets her down," or, "She would have been even prettier if her eyes were green."

Enjoying oneself at the expense of other people's errors or deficiencies is another cruel aspect of the Religion of the Ignorant: Laughing at someone's being cross-eyed, for example, behind their back, saying, "I can't tell if he's looking at me or you," or "I can't manage to look him in the eye." Saying things like "Hold tight!" when handing something to a clumsy person, or telling someone who's going bald of all the new hair restorers on the market, or saying things like, " They've developed a new hair-replacement treatment. We'd better get you an appointment," or, "It looks like you've lost a few more hairs since last night." Saying ignorant things to a short person such as "How's the air down there?" or, "How's the view from down there?"

All these are methods of cruelty employed in Ignorantism. Others include laughing at someone who has fallen, mocking someone whose clothes are tattered, or imitating someone who stammers.

In such situations, those on the receiving end generally respond with behavior appropriate to the Religion of the Ignorant. They may

laugh to avoid giving the impression that their feelings are hurt. Yet inside, they still feel the pain those words caused. Alternatively, the victim may counterattack by referring to a defect in the other party, and thus this ugly behavior takes on a life of its own.

6- PROVOCATIVE TACTICS

Another important feature of Ignorantism is seeking to anger other people. Some people behave this way to annoy people they do not like, and others, to take revenge on someone who has offended them. For others, it becomes a lifestyle all of its own. They take pleasure in exposing others' weaknesses and watching them become angry, and satisfy their own worldly urges in this way. They behave toward their parents, teachers or friends in ways expressly designed to anger.

However, this component of the Religion of the Ignorant is not implemented in a blatant manner. Angering other people has its own particular methodology, which methods include:

"Playing It Cool"

This method is frequently employed by those who enjoy annoying others. Adopting an exceptional calm on subjects which others find important or feel excitement or concern about, is one way to upset them. One often encounters this behavior in young people's attitudes towards their parents. A young girl who wants to get back at her mother for not letting her go out in the evening will respond to all her mother's questions in a very calm, indifferent tone of voice.

While the woman frantically searches for car keys she has mislaid and asks her daughter to help her look, the girl may reply, "I haven't seen the key," in a placid tone and keep on reading her magazine. When her mother is talking on the telephone and urgently

needs a pen and paper to write something down, her daughter may get up—very slowly—and bring her those items in an annoyingly laid-back manner. When her mother asks happily what she did at school that day, she may reply merely, "Nothing much." Asked how her day went, the daughter may just reply, "Fine," and carry on with whatever she's doing, knowing that all such behavior will annoy her mother.

Acting in a very calm manner is designed to hinder someone in a hurry and to slow them down—another method of annoying others with Ignorantism. For example, telling someone who's late for work that he's left his briefcase upstairs, just as that person is heading out of the door, and then walking very slowly upstairs to retrieve it, is performed with the sole purpose of irritating that other person. A student who listens with obvious lack of interest to something his teacher is telling him excitedly, and finally replies, "I have no idea what you are talking about" makes himself feel good by annoying that teacher. This is also behavior appropriate to the Religion of the Ignorant.

Another variation of "playing it cool" is failing to provide satisfactory answers to questions posed. For instance, when asked, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find my shoes. Have you seen them?" merely replying "Yes" is a tactic designed to irritate. Merely answering "In the room," when asked where the shoes were seen, and failing to state which particular room forces the other party to ask still more questions, such as, "Which room? Wherein the room? In which cupboard, and on which shelf?" An issue that could be resolved in a single sentence is prolonged for several minutes, putting the other party to great trouble. Therefore, failing to give full and satisfactory replies is one of the irritating methods employed in Ignorantism.

Pretending not to Hear, See or Understand

In societies of the ignorant, this method is usually employed by people who dispute with each other in order to get back at each other. They use it to upset the person they have disputes with by annoying them, imagining that they are inflicting their revenge in this way. In a social setting, for example, looking at those one disputes with disdainfully and not talking to them, as if they did not exist, laughing at everyone's jokes except theirs, greeting everyone else but not them, not saying goodbye to them even though one does to everyone else, and asking after everyone's health except those particular individuals'. Cutting them dead this way effectively means "Just that you know, you are of no importance to me," according to the criteria of the Religion of the Ignorant.

People who have made this technique a habit use it very often. Pretending not to listen even though they can actually hear perfectly what another is saying, and making it clear how little they value them with such things as "Sorry, what were you saying?" or, "Did you say something?" is Ignorantist behavior adopted by such people. Making someone else constantly explain what one understands perfectly is another way of irritating others. Asking, "How do you mean?" when told that one is dawdling over and to act a bit faster, is a way of putting that person to extra trouble and making them regret having complained in the first place. The way that a young girl asks, "How do you mean?" when her mother asks her to be tidier is an annoying tactic employed in the face of such criticism. The fact is, everyone knows what acting quicker or being tidier means, and these matters can be put into practice without the slightest difficulty.

Barbed Comments

Another means of annoying other people is uttering barbed

comments. At a business meeting attended by someone who has been appointed to a senior position through knowing someone influential, saying, "I wish I had important contacts so I could get to the top!" is one example. Alternatively, saying, "We have to pay the price for other people's mistakes" in the presence of someone who has made an honest mistake is another way of making barbed comments. Not mentioning a name, but referring to "certain people" is another of the ugly rules that apply in the Religion of the Ignorant.

A student envious of someone who always obtains higher marks may say, "Certain people actually study all night but never let on" in that person's presence, simply in order to annoy him.

Annoying with a Glance

People generally resort to using looks to express what they cannot put into words. An imputation expressed in a look can never be proven, and people can easily deny the intention behind their facial expressions. For example, anyone who directs a look of hatred towards someone can always say, "I was thinking of something else. That's why my expression changed. It had nothing to do with anyone," then everyone has to accept his explanation. Alternatively, when someone who used a mocking look says, "No, I was listening to you very carefully. It's just that something came into my head which is why you may have formed the impression I was laughing at you," no one can object. There is no physical proof of mockery in a facial expression. Yet a person's expression can express all kinds of opinions, positive or negative, in a crystal-clear way. So a great many in the society of the ignorant rely solely on looks to annoy others.

For example, when people must talk to someone they've fallen out with, they assume a very cold expression, making it quite clear

they have no respect for that person. As one listens, lowering one's eyelids and opening them very slowly when a subject not to one's liking is brought up, is another tactic in Ignorantism.

One's eyes can also hold a mocking look designed to make it clear how much one despises someone else. This method assumes the form of laughing with one's eyes while one's face remains expressionless. Someone who appears to be listening very seriously to what another has to say, but whose eyes are full of laughter, is actually saying, "Keep on talking, but what you are saying is going in one ear and out of the other."

7- BEING CLOSED TO NEW IDEAS AND CRITICISM

In terms of character and moral values, a person who lives by the Religion of the Ignorant can never register any progress through life. The Ignorantism places a strict ban on new ideas and criticism. It is almost impossible to criticize or suggest new ideas to someone older, richer, more cultured, in a higher position, more attractive or more experienced than oneself. Indeed, so strict are the rules in this regard that friendships that have lasted 20 or 30 years can come to an end, never to be restored, as the result of a single criticism.

For example, in the Religion of the Ignorant, it is exceedingly humiliating for anyone to be told about his behavior, moral values, character or gestures by another party. That is why in the society of the ignorant, you'll generally never see anyone asking anyone else's opinion or seeking their advice.

It is almost impossible, for instance, to hear such questions as, "Is there anything in my character you don't like? Can you see any flaws in the way I laugh, or walk, or in my facial expressions? Do you have any advice to give me about my personality? How could I

be easier to get on with or more beloved?" or, "What do you think of my taste in clothes? Have you any advice you could give me as one listens?" That is in total contradiction of Ignorantism for someone to seek to improve himself by seeking advice from others. Everyone regards himself as the best, the most cultured, the most refined and the most intelligent. Even if he knows he has flaws and needs to work on himself, he'll never want to let those around him know.

The Religion of the Ignorant is completely against seeking advice and criticism. Consider, for example, a doctor or engineer who's an expert in his own field. If a client says that he has received a different opinion from another professional, the answer will inevitably be along the lines of, "In that case, go to him." Experts in their own field are generally reluctant to take advice from their colleagues and want clients to act on their own recommendations.

Under this belief, it's impossible for someone to take kindly to criticism from anyone younger—a nephew, for example. Practically no young person can make any suggestions about the character of his aunt or uncle. A youngster who wants some relative to be more patient, tolerant or more considerate will likely meet with a mocking, indifferent or angry reaction. People who answer, "I am not about to take advice from someone your age," imagine they need no help from anyone younger. But a young person with proper morals and deep faith can be a great deal more intelligent and spiritually mature, and have a finer conscience, than an older person without faith.

Indeed, the words spoken by the Prophet Ibrahim (as) to call his father to the true path, as revealed in the Qur'an, set an example:

Mention Ibrahim in the Book. He was a true man and a prophet. Remember when he said to his father, "Father, why do you worship what can neither hear nor see and is not of any use to you at all? Father, knowledge which never

reached you has come to me, so follow me and I will guide you to the right path. Father, do not worship satan. Satan was disobedient to the All-Merciful. Father, I am afraid that a punishment from the All-Merciful will afflict you, and turn you into a comrade of satan." He said, "Do you forsake my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not stop, I will stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time." He said, "Peace be upon you. I will ask my Lord to forgive you. He has always honored me." (Surah Maryam, 41-47)

In Ignorantism, rank and culture prevent criticism from being taken on board. A worker can never advise the boss of the factory where he works; neither regarding work, nor that person's character, nor any other matter. Indeed, if an intolerant, oppressive employer does receive advice from one of his employees, very likely the first thing he'll do is fire that worker. Offering advice in such a way is a grave insult in the Religion of the Ignorant.

However, this is a most erroneous perspective and incompatible with the moral values of the Qur'an. The arrival of criticism is a sign of a great blessing and of great friendship. The Qur'an commands people to encourage what is good and forbid what is bad. It is of course very poor behavior to prevent someone from abiding by this command or to turn one's back on good advice.

8- ATTITUDES TOWARDS GUESTS

When people lose their spiritual values, the gap is filled by the Ignorantism, itself built upon irreligion. The Religion of the Ignorant will inevitably be present wherever Islamic moral values are absent. Wherever Ignorantism is found, behavior compatible with proper moral values such as humanity, consideration and devotion will be lacking.

We can cite the attitude of adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant towards guests. First, however, it will be useful to examine the pleasing aspects of Islamic moral values on this subject.

Assume that you are a guest in the home of someone living by the moral values of the Qur'an. Whoever receives you will be delighted to have you as his guest, because welcoming a guest is regarded as a virtue in Islam, and guests are always treated with the greatest respect. From the moment you enter his home, therefore, you will experience smiling faces, and warm and sincere interest, even from people you meet for the first time. Even if your host has only limited means, he will muster them all to welcome you, because in the Qur'an, Allah teaches a custom of welcoming by offering things even before they are needed. The attitude towards guests of the Prophet Ibrahim (as), as revealed in the Qur'an, reveals just what the perspective on guests should be:

Has the story reached you of the honored guests of Ibrahim? When they entered his dwelling and said, "Peace!" he said, "Peace, to people we do not know." So he slipped off to his household and brought a fattened calf. He offered it to them and then exclaimed, "Don't you then eat?" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 24-27)

As can be seen, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) treated his guests with great consideration, even though he did not know them, and offered them refreshment without causing any embarrassment.

When Ignorantism prevails, however, people's attitudes are exceedingly selfish and inconsiderate. If you go to the home of someone under the spell of the Religion of the Ignorant, you will experience an intense feeling of being a burden, because under the moral values of that religion, a guest is regarded as just another mouth to feed.

People concerned over mutual interests, of course, play host to one another at specific times to keep their relations on a sound footing. However, under the rules of Ignorantism, when one person visits the home of another, he is later expected to repay that hospitality in kind. Being someone else's guest three or four times in a row is out of the question!

The hosts impatiently await their guests' departure. They cannot abide their presence for more than a few hours. If the guest has not been specifically invited for dinner, they will not offer him anything to eat. Since the emphasis is on sending the guest back home by incurring as little expenditure as possible, a few of the very cheapest things may be brought in and handed round. Hosts generally set aside the best for themselves and minimize costs by offering the worst to their guests. It's regarded as the height of bad manners for guests to have more than one helping at dinner, and if they do ask for any more, the hosts will secretly gossip in the kitchen about how ill-bred they are, saying things like, "Don't they eat a lot? Let's hope they don't stay too long." Neither is the guest's wandering about the house welcomed, and no matter how long they may stay, never are they invited out of the living/dining room. If the guest does happen to leave the room, they are made to feel that this is unwelcome.

If the guest has traveled from a long way away and must stay for a few nights, the hosts' patience will be tried to the extreme. In a short while, everything the guest eats, does, and wears will become a separate cause for complaint. The hosts will calculate every penny they've spent, from the olive pits left on the plate to the cups of tea consumed, from the number of meals the guest has eaten to the number of baths taken and the volume of water consumed. Their every action will soon make the guest feel unwanted. It's therefore

impossible to feel comfortable in such a home.

Of course, guests also behave in accord with the rules of the Religion of the Ignorant. That means seeking to extract as much benefit as possible from the home in which they are guests and never thinking whether they are making their hosts at all uneasy. They will engage in many other forms of thoughtlessness.

In conclusion, no matter what the situation, people establish an environment that troubles both themselves and others. The reason for this is poor moral values, far removed from those of the Qur'an. The difference between the warmth that Islam encourages in a person and the moral values prevailing in Ignorantism can be seen clearly in every aspect of daily life. Due to the inhumane, thoughtless and selfish behavior created by the Religion of the Ignorant, a great many are troubled, unable to live at ease or find a close, trustworthy friend. Nonetheless, millions continue to abide by Ignorantism with the greatest determination, thus causing themselves great distress. This situation is described in the Qur'an:

Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves. (Surah Yunus, 44)

9- THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AGE IN IGNORANTISM

The Religion of the Ignorant stipulates a form of behavior for every age group. This is not written down or described anywhere, but people who live in the world are aware of this, and practice it in all its details. For example, they believe that when they approach 50 or 60, their lifestyles, manner of speech, clothes, tone of voice and style must all change in accord with Ignorantism.

The main principle of this change is pessimism, founded on withdrawal from the blessings of this world. People reaching that

age generally start to complain about life. Asked how they are, such people will give negative replies along the lines of "As well as can be expected, under the circumstances" or "Trying to recover my health." They entertain the superstitious belief that they have no right to take any pleasure from life and from now on, they should distance themselves from its blessings.

According to the Religion of the Ignorant, the menopause in women and the andropause in men is a time when behavior needs to be totally overhauled. A great many people of that age abandon everything of beauty. They cease taking care of their bodies. They attach little importance to their appearance and pay scant attention to cleanliness. They begin wearing dark-colored clothes, generally preferring brown, grey and black—a kind of mourning for their lost youth. They imagine that there is no need for bright colors like red, orange, yellow, green or pink. Yet this is a most meaningless rule. People can use the colors created by Allah and benefit from this blessing at all ages.

At this age, some people's behavior and style undergo a total change. Even though they have no physical infirmities, they believe that they have to be slow-moving and lifeless. Their reactions become dull, and they begin talking very slowly, one word at a time. They spend a long time describing something that could be clarified quickly, and regard this as another requirement of old age.

People who were full of life in their youth suddenly, and of their own free will, lose all hope, joy and vivacity. For example, they experience no excitement in the face of a beautiful view, an attractive person, a pretty song or a demonstration of good behavior. On the contrary, they often grow sad at such moments.

According to the rules of Ignorantism, people must start waiting for death after reaching such an age. That is why nearly all who

have reached their 60s are just waiting to die. Production comes to a standstill, out of their prevailing belief that nothing remains to be done.

Someone who produced ideas in his youth now ceases to use that ability. Another who was once very clever and able now begins to pretend to understand nothing, to hear with difficulty, to think slowly and be good for nothing, just because he has reached a certain age. Most people spend the final 20 years of their lives looking out the window, or watching soaps on television, totally divorced from the beauties of this world. This damage stems from the fact that accustoming themselves to not using their talents leads to a gradual slowing down of the mental faculties and early senility.

The correct course of action is for a person to work both physically and mentally and to perform good deeds in this world for the sake of the Hereafter, to the extent that their capacities permit, as long as they have no serious illness. In one verse Allah commands: **"So when you have finished, work on"** (Surat al-Inshirah, 7). No doubt that this command of Allah's applies to people of all ages.

10- DISCRIMINATION IN IGNORANTISM

One of the most important features of Ignorantism is how it values people. This religion divides people into two groups—rich and poor. A different perspective and thus a different form of behavior is applied to each. The difference in attitudes towards rich and poor is just about the same all over the world, in terms of gestures, tone of voice and even glances. An American adopts this behavior required by the Religion of the Ignorant, as does a Frenchman, and a Russian.

This difference in behavior may be summarized as follows:

1- Ignorant people generally adopt a delicate, softer tone of

voice towards those who are wealthier and of higher status than themselves, and speak as courteously as possible. When dealing with someone poorer, however, their tone of voice grows more natural, whatever the person's real voice sounds like. Their speech becomes harsher and cruder, with no need for courtesy felt. The subject is dealt with as briefly as possible. One example can be heard in the tone of voice when speaking to one's boss and those used in addressing the cleaning lady. Since there is a chance of securing some kind of advantage from the boss, his employees will speak in a gentle, respectful tone, to make it clear that they respect him. Since they have no expectations from the cleaning lady, they employ a style that shows no respect at all.

2- When a wealthy person arrives, people's movements are quick and careful. Everyone is at great pains to ensure that everything is as that person would wish, to fulfill his every desire, and make sure that nothing untoward happens. When a poor person arrives, nobody generally bothers at all. Everyone behaves calmly, slowly and disinterestedly. When a wealthy person enters, everyone stands up, dusts himself off and pays attention to how he sits back down. Nobody stands for poor people, however, nor even glances in their direction, and nobody alters the position they're sitting in.

3- Unlike poor people, the wealthy are generally addressed in very polite, formal language. A rich person entering a shop will be asked "How may I be of service?" in a very respectful manner, however a poor person will be addressed in a humiliating tone and will be asked "What do you want?"

4- Wealthy people are paid the most careful respect. Even if quite young, they will still be treated with the respect normally due someone much older. People even give their seats up to very young individuals, and kiss their hands if they are in a country where such

a custom applies. However, even if a poor person is quite elderly, he will still be treated like a child, and be addressed with expressions more appropriate to children, such as "And how are we today?", "you tell me now, what do you want?"

The way this discrimination is reflected in people's behavior can be clearly observed even when entering shops. As soon as wealthy regular customers enter a boutique, all the staff will head towards them. They'll be greeted with smiles, and be asked what they'd like. Whatever they ask for will quickly be placed before them. More will be brought out for inspection before the first have even been examined. The staff will have permanent smiles on their faces. If the customer has children in tow, compliments will be rained down upon them.

Assume that poor customers enter the same shop. If it is apparent from their clothes and general appearance that they have little money, no one in the shop will show much interest in them. Nobody will even approach them unless they ask a question of one of the staff. If they ask to see anything, it will be brought out very slowly and reluctantly. The staff will generally not produce anything else for that customer's inspection. In addition, the sales assistants will wear bored, irritated expressions, since the staff will want those customers to leave as quickly as possible. They will deliberately glance outside when fulfilling that customer's wishes or else chat with someone else in the shop. If the customers have children in tow, they will irritably ask them to keep an eye on them.

This example is most instructive in revealing the attitude of Ignorantism, because this logic and behavior can also be seen in bank cashiers, waiters, tailors, and grocers. Wherever you go in the world, you can see similar behavior in people who live far removed

from proper religious moral values.

In the Religion of the Ignorant, for someone to be shown respect and interest, that person must possess obvious material means. The greater that person's fortune, the greater the admiration felt for them by members of Ignorantism. When you go to a restaurant, for instance, you see that wealthy customers are the subject of great interest and concern. Indeed, if they are best-known celebrities, it's unlikely that their money will be accepted at all. Their very presence in the restaurant is regarded as an honor, and they are not asked to pay their bill. Yet if a poor person hasn't have enough money, there will be a huge scene. He will be shouted at, humiliated and thrown out. In other words, no money at all will be requested from the wealthy, but the poor must pay down to the very last penny.

Wealth is the sole difference between these two people, meaning that respect and interest are not shown to individuals, but rather to their wealth. This is one of the ugly aspects of the Religion of the Ignorant.

In Islam, people are evaluated solely according to their moral values. A person who is poor but possesses decent moral values is many times superior to a wealthy person who defies the commandments of Allah. For that reason, there is definitely no discrimination between people in Islam. Proper moral values count, not wealth, status or power. In one verse Allah reveals:

It is not your wealth or your children that will bring you near to Us—only in the case of people who believe and act rightly; such people will have a double recompense for what they did. They will be safe from all harm in the High Halls of Paradise. (Surah Saba', 37)

11- THE CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING FRIENDS IN IGNORANTISM

In Islam, the sole criterion for choosing friends is their moral values. In the Religion of the Ignorant, the yardstick is very different.

Every culture has a number of rules peculiar to itself. For example, someone from a pseudo-intellectual milieu will be careful that the friends he selects are compatible. He will first look at external appearances and prefer to establish friendship with someone who dresses scruffily, wears a neckerchief around his neck, thick boots on his feet, pays little attention to cleanliness, and has a goatee and odd accessories, rather than someone clean and tidy who dresses classically in well-ironed clothes. That is because in Ignorantism, external appearance generally reflects a particular culture. This view of life cares little for moral values or other people, and thinks that nobody has any responsibilities toward anybody else.

There are also circles that consider only the financial circumstances of the person before them. In the Religion of the Ignorant, the price of the clothes a person wears must first be analyzed to establish whether he is worth talking to, taking ideas from and establishing friendships with. The make of a person's jacket, shoes, bag, perfume, wristwatch, shirt and even socks are all of the greatest importance. Next, it's important to establish whether they have a car, if it's parked anywhere visible, and if so, the particular model.

These are preconditions for taking the first step. In the second step, information needs to be obtained about the individual's family, such as their father's profession, where they studied, their mother's acquaintances, the hairdresser they frequent, where they vacation, which district they live in—all are necessary in deciding whether to establish a permanent friendship. If the person before them passes

all these tests, then that individual's moral values, character, beliefs or world view, no matter what they may be, are of no importance: He or she enters the category of potential friend.

Some people possess all these qualities, but are totally without any form of culture. Not well-rounded, coarse, they have the most repellent moral values. They mock those around them and protect their own interests above all else. They have no idea how to mend relations with people, apologize, or even admit their mistakes. In situations that conflict with their own interests, they find it easy to lie and take no interest in others' problems. They put up with no difficulties for the sake of others' comfort, health or happiness, and are ignorant of self-sacrifice. Yet you see a huge number of admirers around such people. In fact the only reason for the interest shown in them, even though everyone sees their character and moral defects, are the warped criteria prevailing in Ignorantism.

Therefore, in the society of the ignorant, you seldom see groups of friends from different classes with very different material means. The rich establish friendships with other wealthy people, the moderately well-off with other moderately well-off, the cultured with the cultured, and the poor with others like themselves.

12- OPPORTUNISM AND SELF-INTEREST

One of the most distinguishing features of anyone who takes the Qur'an as his guide is exceptional altruism. Such a person knows that all his possessions actually belong to Allah and have been given to him in trust to seek His approval, for which reason they have to be consumed on our Lord's behalf. That expenditure—in other words, the giving of alms—is one of the main religious observances in Islam.

Believers must give the assets they possess, to the fullest extent

possible, to those listed by Allah in the Qur'an:

The alms are for: the poor, the destitute, those who collect it, reconciling people's hearts, freeing slaves, those in debt, spending in the way of Allah, and travelers. It is a legal obligation from Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 60)

This religious observance, to be performed for Allah's pleasure, is a source of great pleasure, joy and contentment for believers, and its importance is emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an. In Surat al-Baqara, it is revealed that those with true devoutness are those who, **"despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to travelers and beggars and to set slaves free"** (Surat al-Baqara, 177). And in Surat al-Insan it is revealed that believers **"... give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives"** (Surat al-Insan, 8). Another verse describes the importance of the subject:

You will not attain true goodness until you give of what you love. Whatever you give away, Allah knows it. (Surah Al 'Imran, 92)

No doubt, one of the most important characteristics of a society of altruistic believers is their practice of giving alms in order to gain the approval of Allah. Members of the society think about the general interest, rather than their own individual concerns, and behave accordingly. When their own interests conflict with those of another member, they act in accord with that other individual in order to gain Allah's approval. Examples of the superior moral values experienced between believers who migrated to Madina and the believers living there are described in the following terms in the Qur'an:

Those who were already settled in the abode, and in faith, before they came, love those who have migrated to them

and do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given and prefer them to themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful.
(Surat al-Hashr, 9)

In contrast, the Religion of the Ignorant constructs a model of society totally based on personal interests. Someone raised in Ignorantism is encouraged from childhood to develop a self-interested, egotistical character. The model that people observe in their families, friends and society as a whole is a self-interested, opportunistic one that observes and defends personal interests only. Under such influences, a child learns that it is "Everyone for himself."

Self-interest and opportunism are features of this religion. Extracting the most advantage for one's own interests under all circumstances is an indication of clever self-interest. Accordingly, people must consider their own interests wherever they may find themselves, and act for their own maximum advantage.

Relations between individuals are also shaped according to that principle. In the workplace, employees seek to extract the maximum advantage from their employer, and vice-versa. The customer seeks to extract the most from the sales representative, the sales representative from the customer, and friends from one another.

In societies living by the Religion of the Ignorant, exploitation is regarded as normal and becomes the basis of society's moral values. Everyone makes constant, intense efforts to exploit those one step below them on the ladder. Missing such an opportunity is regarded as naiveté, or stupidity. Such a mindset, based on the philosophy of "You only live once," stems from having no fear of Allah. This conflict of interests leads to people having vulgar characters.

On occasion, some members of Ignorantism sometimes engage in altruism, and helping the poor and needy. Yet these allegedly altruistic adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant don't do these things sincerely in order to gain the approval of Allah, as is the case with believers, but to show off to others. The situation of such people is described as follows in one verse:

You who believe! Do not nullify your charity by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not believing in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left stripped bare. They have no power over anything they have earned. Allah does not guide disbelieving people. (Surat al-Baqara, 264)

Such people donate large sums of money to organizations set up to help the poor or orphans. Yet these donations inevitably take place in the media spotlight, where hundreds of thousands can witness this philanthropy. And that is the goal in mind. These people are in fact very mean and never make the slightest effort to help others. With these ostentatious donations, they are actually engaging in a form of commerce. In return for the money they donate, they are purchasing a good image in society, which feeds their pride and represents a kind of capital for even more profitable investments. It is revealed in the Qur'an that such people are actually very parsimonious and that the alms they donate are given solely for reasons of show:

As for those who are tight-fisted and direct others to be tight-fisted, and hide the bounty Allah has given them, We have prepared a humiliating punishment for those who disbelieve, and also for those who spend their wealth to

show off to people, not believing in Allah and the Last Day. Anyone who has made satan his comrade, what an evil comrade he is! What harm would it have done them to have believed in Allah and the Last Day and to have given of what Allah has provided for them? Allah knows everything about them. (Surat an-Nisa', 37-39)

Other verses state that parsimony is a characteristic of unbelievers:

Have you seen him who turns away and gives little, and that grudgingly? (Surat an-Najm, 33-34)

Surat al-Qalam refers to garden owners with the parsimonious character of Ignorantism. The verses read:

We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they swore that they would harvest in the morning but did not say the redeeming words, "If Allah wills." (Surat al-Qalam, 17-18)

In the morning they called out to one another, "Leave early for your land if you want to pick the fruit." So they set off, quietly saying to one another, "Do not let any poor man into it today while you are there." (Surat al-Qalam, 21-24)

The garden owners described in the verses try to go to their work without encountering any poor people, because they do not wish to help them. When they do meet one, however, they will be obliged to give them money, out of their concern that people will form an unwelcome opinion of them. In short, they have a most insincere, hypocritical and vulgar character—one of the classic features of the Religion of the Ignorant.

Believers of noble characters seek only the approval of Allah and compete with one another in doing good. In order to please Allah, what matters is not the skill that people show in accumulat-

ing wealth and property, but how much they consider His approval in what they do. The cleverness acceptable in the sight of Allah is constantly observing the interests of believers, raising their levels of well-being, always seeking the greatest measure of Allah's approval, refusing to be swept away by evil and worldly desires and to be deceived by satan and his whisperings, constantly increasing in faith and reason and improving moral values. In this way, the noble characters of Muslims who seek maximum approval from Allah are reflected outwardly. This is described in the Qur'an:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are fierce to the disbelievers, merciful to one another. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking Allah's good favor and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah. And their likeness in the Gospel is that of a seed which puts up a shoot and makes it strong so that it thickens and grows up straight upon its stalk, filling the sowers with delight—so that by them He may infuriate the disbelievers. Allah has promised those of them who believe and do right actions forgiveness and an immense reward. (Surat al-Fath, 29)

The Psychology of Imposition

In Ignorantism, controlling and establishing dominion over the others, and directing them in the manner one wants are important and necessary for survival, as is portraying oneself as different from how one really is. This may be summarized as imposing one's will. In the Religion of the Ignorant, one of the ways of rising to the top is mastery of the art of imposing one's will on others, which has its own unique techniques and tactics. This is such an important matter

that a great many books have been written offering advice on the subject.

Naturally, the most important means employed in imposing one's will on others are finding weaknesses in others that stem from features of Ignorantism. The more an individual's character conforms to the Religion of the Ignorant, the greater his weaknesses, and thus capacity to be imposed on.

Weaknesses such as pride and arrogance, the desire to put on a show, the urge to be praised and appreciated, sentimentality, portraying oneself as different to how one really is, and efforts to take advantage of situations, can easily be manipulated with expert techniques in any direction one wishes.

The people to be imposed upon—who might be anyone, from a public employee to a bridegroom candidate that one is too keen to marry—must possess some means that could possibly secure an advantage for one. In all social arenas—business, school, commerce, politics, social life, marriage—there are people that might be of assistance to others, that might help them secure an advantage of some sort, or help them strengthen their social position, once they have been imposed upon. All that is necessary is that the necessary connection be established in light of the relevant position and conditions.

The degrees of imposition are directly proportional to the expertise, effort and determination of the individual doing the imposing. In the same way, the cleverness, expectations and weaknesses of the person being imposed affect that imposition and its extent.

13- HANGERS-ON

Another character revealed by Ignorantism is the hanger-on. The most obvious of these people live as though they were rich

when they are not actually so, wear expensive clothes and live in good houses they really cannot afford, even though their families are in difficult financial circumstances. Such people come by these means by riding on the coattails of someone they specially select. They live their lives by using that person's money, acquaintances, and everything else they possess. In return they perform various functions, such as doing all that person's dirty work, satisfying their wishes and maintaining their self-confidence.

If you look carefully, you can spot a hanger-on beside almost every wealthy or famous individual. Both dress in the same way, but you can immediately tell the hanger-on. He's the one who is constantly humiliated, shouted at, who performs services, constantly praises the other party, agrees with whatever he says, and does everything he wants. The other party is praised, has all his wishes met, all his words agreed with and generally humiliates the hanger-on.

The hanger-on's most important duty is to entertain the person he is with, restore his spirits and maintain his self-confidence. That means telling that person how attractive he is when he feels himself to be ugly, cheering him up when he is downcast, laughing at his jokes, listening to his problems and coming up with solutions, and consoling him by showing the respect that nobody else truly feels for him.

These two people spend every hour of the day together. They go everywhere together, go the hairdresser and places of entertainment together, live together and even spend the nights together. When shopping, hangers-on generally wait for the other to try on clothes, help him dress, say which clothes suit him, hold his bags, answer the mobile phone for him, pass on messages, and fulfill all his wishes. After buying many things for himself, the person trying on the clothes will then buy the hanger-on a few items as recom-

pense for all the services he has performed. The wealthy party generally picks up the tab for his hanger-on whenever they go out to eat, to the barber, or to a place of entertainment.

Another distinguishing feature of a hanger-on is that he generally stays in the home of the person he's attached to, rather than in his own. He uses the facilities provided there, wears the clothes in his friend's wardrobe, eats in that house, and orders around the serving staff as if they were his own. In order to do all this, however, he constantly flatters his friend's parents, and behaves in a very intimate manner. The parents begin to regard this individual as one of the household, in order that their child should not be left alone, accept the situation and start looking after the hanger-on. This causes them no discomfort since one of the hanger-on's main talents lies in imposing himself on others. The hanger-on is able to adapt any form of behavior to his own interests. He has a great understanding of how to be all things to all men, immediately adopting the style that someone else likes. He has no personality of his own, and being entirely without integrity, can immediately change personality in the light of the circumstances.

14- AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDES IN IGNORANTISM

Another requirement of the Religion of the Ignorant is to have an aggressive character, because being the winning party in any conflict is a matter of prestige. Being victorious is a sign of superior intelligence, strength or character. Being defeated is a sign of weakness. Therefore, people do all they can to emerge victorious from any conflict or debate.

Conflict is also regarded as an indicator of personality. If a person can stand up for himself in the face of a situation he does not

like, then this—according to Ignorantism—shows that he possesses a strong character. Thus you can witness frequent scenes of strife among people who do not live by the true religion.

One of the most obvious arenas of such conflict is in traffic. Driving for even a quarter of an hour, you can encounter hundreds of attitudes peculiar to the Religion of the Ignorant.

In traffic, people tend to disparage drivers around them and do all they can to demonstrate how little worth they attach to them. They refuse to give way to one another. If someone behind them blows the horn, they regard this as an insult and deliberately drive very slowly, in order not to be browbeaten. They criticize all the other drivers around them, and frequently make rude hand signals. Whenever you take a taxi or a bus, you can often hear them shout inside their cars, "Are you blind? Keep your eyes open! You could get a battleship through there! You're not the only one in a hurry!"

The fiercest conflicts, thus the strongest reactions of Ignorantism, emerge in the wake of accidents. Invariably, when two cars crash into each other, each driver casts blame on the other. In all probability, the guilty party will strongly deny any responsibility. Both sides tend to put on displays of anger, shouting and trying to browbeat the other. If that fails, they put on temper tantrums, imagining that this will intimidate the other party into admitting guilt. If this, too, is insufficient, they may resort to physical violence to protect their image.

It is generally imagined that in situations of this kind people start fighting because they are unable to stop themselves. The fact is, however, that behavior of this sort is a requirement of the Religion of the Ignorant and is planned right down to the finest detail. People involved in traffic accidents have already learned by heart the gestures they will employ and even the words they will use as they get

out of their vehicles. As soon as an accident takes place they automatically start implementing these rules they have learned by rote. These gestures and words, common to all parts of the world, are thus resorted to as a requirement of Ignorantism.

15- THE MACHO SPIRIT

Another common personality trait widespread among males in the Religion of the Ignorant is machismo.

Their macho spirit begins in adolescence and generally continues up to middle age, exerting a major effect on attitudes and behavior. These men have common attitudes and forms of behavior.

This personality trait has its own principles and in its advanced form, can become a philosophy and ethical system. There is an ethical machismo with its own rights and wrongs and its own virtues. Under this system, it is gravely immoral to cast one's eyes on the daughters of friends or neighbors. When this is done to someone not living locally, however, this is regarded as macho behavior. There is a superficial logic of protection of local women and daughters. In theory, rightness or honesty is an unchanging element of the macho spirit, but in practice, all kinds of falsehood are seen as cleverness and highly esteemed.

This culture is generally based on proving oneself, so an aggressive state of mind predominates. Posing as a psychopath, sudden interventions, unbalanced behavior and being ready to fight at any moment are indications of how macho a man is. One method frequently resorted to is adopting an off-putting and exceedingly unbalanced appearance in order to be feared. Accessories such as large chains or medallions are indispensable accessories of machismo.

Their conversations generally concentrate on football, fighting or the opposite gender. It is highly esteemed to engage in long con-

versations discussing political, economic or social matters, with second-hand information obtained from print media.

The macho, with such individual traits as indifference and aggression, satisfies his social and ideological impulses with partisanship. A fanatical group psychology rules, manifesting itself in various forms, such as supporting a particular football team or group of friends, or being from the same area or town or same street. How such people protect and support one another is a component of macho ethics.

With increasing age, a man moves away from the macho mindset in direct proportion to the social, economic and cultural level he has achieved, and there is a move towards a new personality that altered circumstances require. For example, for people who haven't registered very much social improvement and who belong to a lower-class culture, the macho character becomes a complete identity as the result of the lack of character resulting from ignorance. People who know they'll be unable to rise to the top in society by means of their professions, culture and intelligence will give themselves airs and generally feel the need to cling to machismo with both hands. That mindset continues throughout their lives. Since this applies to a large section of society, the macho character constitutes the majority's personality structure. Rather than being regarded as odd, it receives support and acceptance.

16- THE FALSE CONCEPT OF RESPECT

We first need to examine the concept of respect revealed in the Qur'an, according to which a believer feels enormous respect for Allah, first and foremost.

Surah Al 'Imran refers to those **"who stand in awe of Allah"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 199). Surat al-Anbiya' says: **"... They outdid one**

another in good actions, calling out to Us in yearning and in awe, and humbling themselves to Us" (Surat al-Anbiya', 90). In Surat al-Muminun, believers are described as **"those who stand in reverent awe of their Lord"** (Surat al-Muminun, 57). In other verses, respect is employed as a component of the sincere awe felt towards Allah.

The source of believers' feelings of respect, therefore, is the respect they feel for Allah. Respect shown for other human beings is a reflection of that fundamental respect. Since believers feel respect for Allah, they respect everyone who obeys Him and seeks to earn His approval—in other words, all believers. (A believer never feels sincere respect for those who are unworthy of it—for those who deny Allah, who behave in a manner that contravenes His approval and who refuse to recognize Him.)

The conception of respect in Ignorantism is of course totally different from the true concept of respect described in the Qur'an. The respect in believers, as already stated, is a genuine and sincere one stemming from respect for Allah. In the Religion of the Ignorant, on the other hand, it manifests itself in hypocritical forms of behavior founded on superficial models and formalistic relationships of mutual interest.

According to Ignorantism, showing respect implies courteous behavior and adopting regular models of speech. Respect is regarded as an attitude that helps a person obtain a place in society, whose duration and form are always changing according to the circumstances and person involved.

Since the philosophy of the Religion of the Ignorant is based upon hypocrisy and falsehood, respect is shown under compulsion and unwillingly. People merely endure the times when they are obliged to show respect. Respect is not part of their characters. From that point of view, Ignorantists feel most at ease in circumstances

where they do not have to show respect for anyone and where they can easily reveal their true natures. Under those circumstances, a person's defects of style, distorted ethical understanding, and true feelings and attitudes about other people emerge.

Just as the concept of "respect" changes according to place and environment, it also changes with age. In the Religion of the Ignorant, people need to prove their self-confidence, that they attach no importance to anyone and therefore have no fear of them—in other words, that their personalities are fully developed. This they do with the exceedingly vulgar and disrespectful behavior commonly referred to as "being real" or "acting natural."

Environments perceived as "natural" have their own particular forms of intrusive behavior. The most obvious manifestations include opening the refrigerator in the kitchen of a stranger, someone one does not know, rummaging through a friend's room, opening a closet and trying on clothes, putting one's feet up on the furniture, assuming a recumbent posture when sitting down, being tactless under the guise of sincerity, speaking loudly, and swearing.

As we've seen, Ignorantism's ethical model is the exact opposite of all the moral principles revealed in the Qur'an. It has been forgotten that an account must be rendered to Allah and that people have been taken in by the baubles of the transitory life of this world. This society is ignorant, in the words of the Qur'an, since it is completely unaware of the existence of Allah and the Hereafter.

The sole arena for people in this society is the life of this world. But the fact is, the life of this world offers nothing but deception:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children: like the plant-growth after rain which delights

the cultivators, but then it withers and you see it turning yellow, and then it becomes broken stubble. In the Hereafter there is terrible punishment but also forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

An ignorant society that has forgotten Allah quickly produces a culture that takes the life of this world as its sole criterion. This culture contains traditions handed down from its forebears, superstitious beliefs and countless ethical rules based on relationships of mutual interests. The Religion of the Ignorant is the name of the culture in question.

Someone born into this society will adopt its culture over a long process of education. From the moment they acquire awareness, they are immersed in the culture of Ignorantism, first from their families and then from those around them. They increasingly learn to use others for their own personal interests, to look out for number one, and to seek goods and status. Members of the society of the ignorant do everything necessary to teach them how to prove themselves as "proper" men.

"HIGH SCHOOL" PSYCHOLOGY IN IGNORANTISM

Ignorantism defines not just people's day-to-day behavior, but their entire lives and perspectives; who they select as friends, how to discriminate between people, what a person's rights and wrongs should be. High school years are one of the most critical periods in a person's life, when the foundations of the Religion of the Ignorant are laid. Concepts envisaged by Ignorantism, along with mindsets, forms of behavior, reactions and ethical understanding are all shaped at this time.

One of the most obvious features of the Religion of the Ignorant, which is the thirst for rank and status, first emerges in a powerful form during the high school period. This thirst is emphasized in the Qur'an in these words:

... [the life of this world is] a cause of boasting among yourselves... (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

In the high school years, a climate of competition emerges among students. Those who learn to be competitive with regard to grades and taking notes will also begin practicing this in other matters they will encounter in later life. Trampling on one another in subjects in which they are rivals is regarded as completely normal, and when it comes to areas where people share joint interests, looking out for one another is equally unexceptional. Outside school, a spirit of unity against the prevailing environment forms, although

between classes or different groups in the same class, there is unrestrained competition.

The custom of Ignorantism, whereby people are classified according to beneficial interests, is shaped during high school years. Groups in high schools are bound together by mutual interests. These groups are generally formed by youngsters from families of similar income levels, students from similar socio-economic circles, diligent students or lazy students. The class as a whole unites only in the face of other classes or against the teachers.

Attitudes welcomed in the Religion of the Ignorant are moral defects such as opportunism and arrogance, rather than virtues indicated in the Qur'an, such as modesty, honesty and submission to Allah. This distorted logic first develops in high school, where students will be popular because of their wealth, attractiveness or "attitude." The way they walk, dress, speak and move become the fashion and are imitated by others. High schools always have their own styles of walking, laughing and dressing. The classic style is a blasé air, an insolent facial expression caring nothing for what is around it, a bag on one shoulder, and a rolling, ponderous, indifferent gait. Laughing loudly and swearing are thought to be signs of character and are widely esteemed. The subjects that groups of friends discuss are generally the same. Girls talk about people they like, clothes and make-up; and boys discuss girls, clothes, football, teachers and lessons.

Judging people not according to their character and moral values but by their material wealth is a deviant sickness of Ignorantism. At high school, it is most important to appear to be wealthy, and intense efforts are made to that end.

Someone wearing ordinary clothes will generally find it hard to approach a group wearing designer labels. It is essential to be beau-

tiful or wealthy to join. An ugly student will be unable to join a group whose members are handsome or beautiful. The caprices of the rich and beautiful are generally tolerated, and a blind eye turned to their spoiled behavior, because they are the source of the group's prestige and pride. Even taking the school bus is regarded as a sign of wealth up to a certain age. As many additions as possible are made to the school uniform to give the impression of being well-off. Girls try to wear high-quality, expensive hair clips. Both boys and girls have a strong interest in brand labels. Designer sweaters and socks all stem from an effort to give the impression of wealth. That's why the best way for a family to please their high school children is to buy them designer outfits. The less well-off compete by means of a few brand-name clothes they've saved up for, because the most important criterion is money and the signs thereof. Money is the way to be esteemed and popular with those around.

Even as examples of poor moral values begin to seem attractive, so good values begin to be denigrated. Attitudes like modesty and honesty begin to seem unattractive. Being hard-working is only esteemed in internal school relations. Taking notes, copying or studying together forges friendships between certain hard-working but asocial types. In choosing one's friends, it is important to select the most entertaining. Ethics are not considered a prime consideration. It's entertainment value and making jokes that matter. As a result, friendships are always temporary and are not based on sound foundations. As their true characters begin to form, students split away from one another, since as people grow older, more powerful interests than making others laugh and entertaining them come to the fore.

Everyone will have a best friend, to whom they will confide what happens with their boy or girlfriend, and with whom they will

share all their secrets. Their sincerity will be in direct proportion to the level of information imparted on that subject. They will confide their thoughts about everyone to that person alone, and will expect them to do the same in return. This is a friendship of confidences. The fact they know things about each other that nobody else does represents a special source of pleasure for the pair concerned. In order to give the impression they know certain things to make others jealous, such sincere friends whisper to one another in group situations, and look one another in the eye and smile.

It never enters a student's head whether their friend has proper moral values, is a believer, has faith, or is honest. Important matters of that kind are not generally grasped during the high school period. Devout people are laughed at, so nobody easily speaks of their beliefs.

Relations between the genders are based upon exploiting one another. Boys tickle or slap girls playfully on the pretext of being intimate. They're keen for their friends to see them together with the girl who can earn them the most prestige. As for girls, going out with the most handsome boy in the class is also a source of pride. Partners are also exchanged in groups of boys and girls. When they tire of one, they start going out with a friend's ex boy- or girlfriend, and tend to criticize whoever they have just split up with.

Everyone must go out over the weekends in order to have something to talk about on Monday morning. If they've not actually been anywhere, they will start to make up fantasies in order not to feel at a disadvantage, and will relate these stories as if they were real. Girls and boys take pleasure in making double entendres or being sharp-tongued, beginning as a form of defense mechanism against other people but eventually becoming a normal style. Since a group psychology generally dominates in schools, those with a

very placid and easygoing nature entering school suddenly adapt to the group psychology and begin doing and saying things they never would normally. Wrong and ugly behavior is welcomed within the group. When with the group, students risk doing things they would never do alone. They oppose their teachers and wolf-whistle at girls, trying to maintain their position in the group.

Seeking others' approval, one of the most significant characteristics of the Religion of the Ignorant, also begins during the high school years. Seeking to prove oneself is a widespread phenomenon. Students constantly seek approval from teachers, friends and relatives. Since these all must be pleased differently, they adopt a number of different personalities, which leads to a rather distorted character emerging. During this time, the feature of Ignorantism of changing personality is acquired. The structure expected by the group matters in the formation of a person's character, not his own will. Since different requests come from all kinds of people, an unstable morality develops. This is very definitely the exact opposite of the moral values of a believer, who serves Allah alone, seeks His approval only, tries to please only Him, and therefore possesses a very sound and stable character. This difference between believers and deniers is described thus in the Qur'an:

Allah has made a metaphor for them of a man owned by several partners in dispute with one another and another man wholly owned by a single man. Are they the same? Praise be to Allah! The fact is that most of them do not know. (Surat az-Zumar, 29)

The different classifications among students in various forms in the Religion of the Ignorant may be summarized under the following names:

The rebellious type: Their most distinguishing characteristic is

their being indifferent to everything and standing up for themselves. They are derogative in every word, incident and environment. They oppose their teachers, mock everyone, have an inordinate amount of self-confidence and constantly make jokes. They are actually sensitive and generally insecure, but seek to cover that up with untoward and difficult behavior. They never reveal their emotionality, speak coarsely and want to be seen as cold types. Since they have to behave in the manner expected of them, they never let their fear or sadness appear on the surface. These people are invariably invited to parties and social occasions, because they entertain others and make them laugh.

The angst-ridden type: These are pessimistic, always troubled and unable to adapt to any environment. They constantly complain about everything. Nothing pleases them, and they find something wrong with everyone. Introverted, they never reveal their true thoughts, and generally have no friends. Since there is nothing entertaining about them, they are not very popular.

The spoiled type generally comes from wealthy backgrounds. They always stress their wealth at every available opportunity. In conflict situations, they always involve their families as a way of overcoming the problem. This type tends to seek its own personality in its family's wealth.

The swotty type regards themselves as inferior to their peers because of various physical imperfections. In order to compensate, they emphasize their knowledge and concentrate on their studies. They seek to attract attention by establishing an expertise in specific subjects, such as electronics, computers or collecting. They take every available opportunity to bring these subjects up to demonstrate their knowledge.

Any high school consists of a number of types, a few of which

we have listed here. When the value judgments of Ignorantism form in students' minds, the main ones are factors such as being entertaining, wealthy or showy. Young people learn to judge others not in terms of moral values like honesty, sincerity, altruism—or, most important of all, faith—but in terms of what benefits might accrue to themselves. As they grow older, their high-school interests such as being entertaining or showing off give way to more powerful ones.

In people who become accustomed to blind belief in rules whose reasons they are unaware of, the mechanisms of reason and conscience are relegated to the background and abandoned to atrophy, at just the most productive period for their development.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF "COURTING" IN IGNORANTISM

Another culture of Ignorantism that starts during this period or shortly afterwards is the psychology of courting. Young men and women raised in a self-interested, selfish way begin to form distorted male-female relationships and prepare themselves for an equally distorted concept of marriage in the period that follows.

A young man who suggests to a girl that they go out together is also offering her a complete package, including his behavior, his manner of speech, troubles, caprices, the places he goes and manner of approaching people. The structure of this package, based on mutual insecurity, is such as to demean both parties and help cause them lose their personalities when put into practice. This relationship model between people maintains its fundamental elements for years, altering only in terms of places attended, clothing, style and behavior in accord with conditions of the time.

During the courting period, both parties share the same state of mind, ways of thinking and looking at events. Indeed, the precondition to experience such a period in the first place is to possess the state of mind it requires. It is impossible to adopt the behavior this system requires with a normal state of mind. This particular state can be experienced only in an environment when emotions hold sway and reason and moral judgments cease to apply.

In deciding whether to go steady, the major factor is how much

display this partnership can achieve. Even if the other party isn't much liked, still it's important to have someone around to show and so not to have to go places all alone. It is hugely embarrassing for a student to have no one to go out with. Neither party uses their own true personality or behaves honestly in order to bind the other to them. They assume a second personality instead.

There is a certain way of meeting and beginning to talk and to date, for every two people who want to date each other.

The girl starts going to particular places in order to meet the person she likes. She first identifies someone at a party, in school or on holiday. She starts to walk around and laugh in such a way as to attract his attention, and seeks to join the group and meet the other party's friends. It's essential in doing this not to allow the boy to sense her interest, though her attention is actually entirely focused on him.

After they have met, the first features to come up for scrutiny are physical appearance and wealth. Make of car, where the other person lives, where they spend the summer, the school they attend, the accessories they wear—all give a fair idea of whether to take an interest. All these are analyzed and a plusses and minuses drawn up before making a decision whether to invite this person out.

There then follows an exchange of phone numbers and an invitation to go somewhere. It's important that the boy should be the one to issue the invitation. He also has to pay when they go out. The next day, the girl spends all day waiting by the telephone and generally doesn't leave the house. The boy will generally not call immediately, so as not to appear too keen. When speaking on the phone, they behave in a manner learned from films, and all contact with the outside world is cut off. The girl has to put on a show of reluctance, even if she actually feels nothing of the sort. After they have spent a

certain amount of time in each other's company, romantic behavior begins. They lose themselves in romantic songs and in an artificial mist.

Once they have started going out together, all their tastes are readjusted. A process begins of dressing according to the taste of the other party and listening to music of the other party's choice, of giving the impression of understanding things one really does not—in short, falsehood. Seeking the other's approval, which is the fundamental motive of the Religion of the Ignorant, takes place at the very highest level. As matters grow more serious, gifts begin to be purchased, and their price tags increase over time. These presents are shown to their respective families and friends. The recipients make it clear that they are sufficiently well liked to be worth such valuable presents. Both parties seek information about the other's families and acquaintances. If one's family is rich, they will immediately seek to show the other where they live. If the family is not rich, then false appearances will be given and the other party kept at a distance. The dissemblers will behave as if they own things they do not, and have gone places they've never been to. Since they know that this will determine the value the other places on them, great expertise will be demonstrated in this area. Having a wide circle of acquaintances is a sign of wealth. They will speak of people they have never met as if they actually know them. There are always certain subject matters of conversation.

In male-female relations, no effort is made to seek the approval of Allah or to observe the bounds set by Him, just as in all other areas. It is not acceptable to be known to be devout and in awe of Allah. The subject is closed by meaningless expressions such as "Everyone has his own beliefs."

Going out is extremely important in terms of showing off to

one's friends. The more people a man is seen with, the greater his status. In addition, the point of his going out with a pretty girl is to provoke his friends' envy and admiration. Girls generally prefer to go with a boy who has a flashy car, because their prestige will rise enormously when their friends at school see it. It's also important for the other party to have a nice home, for their friends to see and admire.

Their relationship is never based on love and respect. It is based on spending empty time together, wandering about, eating, showing off, mutual whispering, so signs of conflict and boredom eventually begin to appear. Girls generally weep every time there is an argument, while boys seek to appear indifferent and unemotional. Their seeking to impose their will and place pressure on each other, and the climate of insecurity between them, soon develop into major problems.

There are no such concepts as devotion and loyalty between them. Both parties know that when the other finds someone more attractive or more handsome, more wealthy or more popular, then they will be dropped at the first available opportunity. They live constantly under the strain this causes. Indeed, this subject is raised whenever possible and used as a threat. Mutual respect soon evaporates. Since they gradually realize that the one they so admired is actually just a helpless human being, even the slightest hint of this puts them off, and their love gradually fades away. Seeing the other person after they have just gotten up, sweating, with acne, or ill with a cold causes the love they feel to diminish rapidly.

They frequently humiliate one another in public. In order not to appear stupid, they say they don't like the other person, talk about their faults and laugh at them in front of friends.

Despite all this, the relationship still persists—out of the fear of

failing to find anyone better. Despite all the arguments and break-ups, they still get back together if they fail to find anyone else. It seems better to have someone to go out with, no matter how unsatisfactory, than for everyone to know one is all alone.

When breaking up, it's also very important to make the first move. People often split up just for the sake of not being the one who gets dumped. Arguments and caprices are important with regard to not being easy to get along with. In the event of getting back together after a break-up, the make-up gift is of the greatest importance, because its cost will show how much that person is valued.

The courting period is when the boy and girl's personalities, moral values and self-respect gradually disappear. Such a period, largely built around show, materialism, pessimism and insincerity, will have permanent destructive effects on the later life of young people just beginning to mature and learn about life.

All this shows how empty and troublesome the relationship model of Ignorantism known as courting or going out together truly is. Yet for many people looking in from the outside, that period appears most enjoyable and delightful. Films are largely responsible for that image. Thousands of movies have depicted this period as one that makes two people in a relationship see the world through rose-colored glasses, and constitutes the happiest moments of their lives. However, this fine picture has nothing to do with real life. Just as with all other relationships in the Religion of the Ignorant, male-female relationships are conducted with insincere and self-interested logic. Both parties enter a troubled, depressive state of mind due to their pride, urge to show off, insincerity and insecurity.

This is in fact a consequence of the hollow life of this world being adorned with baubles, which fact is frequently emphasized in the Qur'an. The main characteristic of satan, who will endeavor until

the Last Day to turn people from the true path, is portraying the world as so attractive. Satan's promise on this subject goes:

He said, "My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on the Earth seem good to them and I will mislead them all, every one of them." (Surat al-Hijr, 39)

If a person fails to use his reason, he will fall under satan's spell and be deceived by the false façade of things in this world that are actually hollow, transitory and troubling.

This also applies to courting, or dating. A young man or woman enters the emotional atmosphere they have viewed in films or learned about from those around them. They imagine that by entering a relationship, they will be the happiest people on Earth. But the fact is, they will soon realize that there is no perfect relationship such as they had imagined. Yet even that will not inspire them to think. They will simply believe they got bored with their old flame and need to start looking for a new one.

Alternatively, they see marriage as a great ambition, imagining that true happiness will begin once they have achieved it. They thus enter a vicious circle, which they can never escape until the day they die, since they fail to use reason. They have now fallen under the scope of the verse in the Qur'an that reads:

To those who disbelieve, the life of this world is painted in glowing colors... (Surat al-Baqara, 212)

They have joined the ranks of those described here:

And what of him the evil of whose actions appears fine to him so that he sees them as good?... (Surah Fatir, 8)

In another verse the situation of such people is revealed in these terms:

As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their actions appear good to them and they wander

about blindly. (Surat an-Naml, 4)

The adornments of this world are deceptive, because they are not real and permanent. The blessings in this world have been created only as an imperfect example of the true blessings in the Hereafter. It is possible to take true pleasure from these blessings only when one realizes that they have been created by Allah as poor examples of the true blessings of the Hereafter. The only way of attaining peace and comfort in this world is to turn to Allah. As revealed in one verse, "... **Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace**" (Surat ar-Ra'd, 28).

Since members of Ignorantism are unable to comprehend this, they forget Allah and, imagining that the adornments of this world are real, solid and permanent, they turn from the true path—and suffer as a consequence. The way that deniers are taken in by the life of this world is described as follows in one verse:

But the actions of those who disbelieve are like a mirage in the desert. A thirsty man thinks it is water but when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing at all, but he finds Allah there. He will pay him his account in full. Allah is swift at reckoning. (Surat an-Nur, 39)

In terms of hopes, dreams and expectations, there is no difference between a male-female relationship lived according to the criteria of the Religion of the Ignorant and far from the approval of Allah, and a mirage, which looks highly attractive and adorned from a distance. When one encounters the truth, however, one sees that these expectations and dreams are hollow and worthless, full of trouble and tension. In the model described, people live in a manner that runs contrary to their true natures. In fact, a person will be pleased by the moral values revealed in the Qur'an and by those values being shown. Since the opposite behavior, words and deeds con-

tradict this nature, they cause everyone unease and distress. For example, there are compassion, trust and tolerance in the love revealed in the Qur'an. In the love that prevails in Ignorantism, on the other hand, there is jealousy, ruthlessness and a general lack of respect.

This conception of love needs to be avoided rather than chased after. The right thing to do is to act in the light of the human nature created by Allah, to show compassion and nourish love.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF "MARRIAGE" IN IGNORANTISM

In Ignorantism, the marriages begin when young men and women reach a certain age. Their parents now wish to see their children "settled down" and to reap the rewards of all their years of hard work. Unlike mere courting, marriages in the Religion of the Ignorant generally do not begin with becoming naturally acquainted.

Since it is thought that men and women of a certain age need to get married, a number of methods try to bring this about. If people are unsuccessful in this, then it is thought the responsibility falls to their families, relatives and friends. The courting period we discussed earlier is regarded as a step toward marriage. If people make poor use of this, then artificial meetings and arrangements are set up. There are well-known and experts in this field, people well known for bringing young people together. Usually of advanced age themselves, they seek out cultured young people with suitable wealth and attractiveness who live in a suitable part of town. Just about every family knows such a person.

The introductory stage of the marriage period is thus initiated. Once introductions have been arranged, the two sides begin examining each other under the magnifying glass in the manner taught them by their families. The time has now come to repay the efforts invested in them by their families since they were very young. A

good marriage is essential, both for one's immediate circle, for oneself and for one's family. Once they have met, if the two sides regard each other's social status, clothes, makes of cars and addresses as suitable, dinner and a date are set up. The process of selecting clothes for this date is rather lengthy. Both parties spend a long time wondering what to wear. Indeed, their friends and family also involve themselves in the process, and the outfit to be worn is a joint decision.

Not much time is required for the parties to be convinced on the subject of marriage. The woman will marry if she thinks that the man is sufficiently well off. The man needs to be convinced that she will represent him properly in business or social circles, and will make a good impression on his arm. An engagement is decided on, which means society's validation of dating.

Right from the outset, insincerity is the distinguishing feature of the whole business. The man stretches his limited means by purchasing flowers and gifts, trying to impress the girl and her family that he is prosperous and generous. Marrying her depends on creating a good impression about his financial means. There is absolutely no hesitation over expenditure in this period, because any costs incurred now will be returned to the couple in the form of a house, money, clothes, and prestige. The family soon sets up a kind of public-opinion poll regarding the prospective bridegroom. Everybody's thoughts concerning him are canvassed. The real aim is to find an answer to the question of *Is this candidate well liked by everyone around?* Information is obtained about the prospective groom's income level and property, and is shared. If his financial position is sound, then his external appearances and moral values are much less important.

Next the families begin to meet. This is a kind of shopping trip. The girl's family calculate what they will receive in return for her—if this not directly in the form of money, it may take the form of prestige, a house or furniture.

Once the decision has been taken, preparations for the engagement begin. Presents are purchased for the girl. The engagement is organized by her family, who expect a magnificent wedding in return. It's decided in advance how much money each side will spend. A full division of costs is worked out. It is decided which side will pay for what, right down to the drinks. Even if the family's financial situation is not strong enough to meet all its expenses, the family will borrow or sell something in order to discharge its obligation. It is very important at this time not to lose face in front of the others, or to give the impression that either one has no money.

Those close to the two sides keenly await the engagement party, when they will be able to eat and drink for free. On the other hand, they also face the problem of buying presents for the bride and groom. How can they get away with the cheapest gift? Those who have something to gain from the couple buy the most expensive gifts, and behave like close family friends.

When one looks at Ignorantist wedding ceremonies, one can observe concern for the deceptive baubles of this world and the sickness of seeking approval of others at the very highest levels. The main objective in staging ostentatious engagement and wedding parties is to put on a show for others. For example, all the neighbors are invited to the opening of the wedding trousseau. The guests then stage exaggerated reactions of how much they like everything. But when they return to their own homes, they generally talk about how poor and useless the objects actually were.

The Wedding Psychology

There are a number of turning points to which members of the Religion of the Ignorant attach great importance. Weddings are one of these. So important are weddings, especially to women, that they imagine that when that day comes, all their dreams will come true. The fact is though, that for many people, their wedding day is most problematic and distressing, because weddings often turn into nightmares due to the tension and lack of submission to destiny.

Not only are the bride and groom and their families calculating their own benefits, but the guests are all calculating their own interests, too. Engagement and wedding parties are ideal occasions for families to find prospective spouses for their own children. They therefore dress their sons and daughters as lavishly as possible and take them along to these events.

Emotional speeches are made at weddings. Some people weep for no reason. Even they themselves do not know why they are crying. Those closest to the family and the elderly weep the most, never forgetting to mention how they personally raised the bride or groom.

The bride's dress and hair preparations begin early in the morning. The hairdresser's bill will be excessive. Everyone is full of joy and generosity on that day. The bride's family tip the hairdresser and his staff with a generosity hitherto unseen, and seek to appear aristocratic and wealthy. On that day, everyone behaves like a professional-events organizer. They shower orders and money right and left. The mother distributes money to everyone for all sorts of things, necessary or otherwise, and the father makes a scene because of that. During this time, people frequently withdraw into corners to weep.

Then it is time for the photographs. People sit down before the

photographer in front of a cloth background with pictures of clouds on it, in tones of red, blue and white. The groom poses next to the bride. Photographs are then taken, in which insincerity is written plain for all to see. These photographs will later be brought out to be shown to others for a whole lifetime—which is indeed the reason for having them taken in the first place. Everyone has to see the kind of wedding the bride had and what kind of dress she wore, and how impressive the groom looked.

On the way to the ceremony, the car carrying the couple is decorated beyond all recognition. Lace and stickers adorn the rear windows, and gold-leafed cardboard letters are arranged on top, representing the bride and groom's initials. Clichéd phrases such as "Just Married" are placed on the licence plate. A plastic baby is often placed on the front of the car, representing the couple's future baby. The families decide long beforehand what the bride and groom will do and where, which answers they will give to whom, when they will smile and when they will cry.

The wedding guests calculate their own best interests. If the son or daughter of any of them is to get engaged or married shortly, the families will pin an expensive gift onto the bride, so that their child will be given something equally expensive when the time comes. Such gifts are attached in the most eye-catching way, in the reception room in full view of everyone. All the guests want to be the star of the occasion. People use videos to record the gift-pinning ceremony. The aim here is to determine who gives what. When the time comes to pin a gift for a similar occasion onto a guest, the aim is for that gift to be only as expensive as that individual's gift. Giving anything better is regarded as plain silly, while giving anything less expensive spells poverty.

Everyone has now done what is expected of them. The guests

are happy to have had a free meal. The families are happy at being able to show off and to strike a good deal in the bargain. The bride and groom are tired and stressed. The ceremony of moving from table to table, kissing or shaking hands is now performed. Everyone's eyes are on the couple, who must behave with the greatest care.

Just about everyone at a wedding of the kind described above has similar goals in mind: showing off to others, material calculations and far from sincere behavior requiring everyone's eyes to be on them. Yet very few think about Allah. None of them think of freeing themselves from their preoccupations and remembering Allah, or giving thanks to Him. They do not consider whether their actions will meet with His approval. They are unaware that the money they have spent unnecessarily may be a waste.

The classic attitudes and behavior that Ignorantist society displays at the wedding of a standard-level individual depict their psychology. Of course, some get married in a very different mindset and environment. Various segments of society may have different attitudes towards introductions, preparations for marriage and the ceremonies themselves. Some people meet through the auspices of intermediaries or their families, and others meet their future spouses at university, at work, or through friends. Some marry at ordinary special-purpose halls, while other weddings are held at five-star hotels and are much more showy and magnificent. Some people adopt a more classical and traditional style, and others a more modern European one. To attract attention, some people are careful to do very different and original things.

Yet it's only the location, the décor or the way the couple meets that changes. The important point is that in the society of the ignorant, marriage is practiced with a most distorted logic. Marriage is

not the formal joining of two people who love and respect one another, but has become an odd institution in which hundreds of ignorant customs and peculiar ceremonies are held, based on show and calculations of self-interest and adorned with insincere and hypocritical behavior.

No matter what their cultural or social status, when it comes to marriage, the fundamental logic, attitudes and psychology of members of the Religion of the Ignorant are exactly the same in terms of show, expectations and self-interest. They implement to the letter the mentality revealed in the verse:

Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children... (Surat al-Hadid, 20)

Indeed, since there is no place in Ignorantism for such concepts as observing the approval of Allah, maintaining the bounds set by Him and living in the manner He has set out, all that remains is the path of Earthly desires, wants, passions and greed. Though the forms and methods may change, the mentality remains the same.

After Marriage

The distorted mentality dealt with in the preceding pages persists after the wedding. The bride and groom experience the first pangs of regret when they see each other on the morning after the wedding. Since they have generally not seen each other in that state before, they already begin to repel one another. As they begin living together in the same house, they witness each other's peculiar habits and abnormalities of which they were hitherto unaware. The person who was once so splendid in their eyes begins to lose value, and that soon leads to cooler relations between them. As time passes, these

negative emotions they harbor towards one another increase. Since the idea of love between them is superficial, they soon see that the emotions they believed to be love have turned into an enforced familiarity.

For the first few months, husband and wife try not to let these feelings show and to get on with one another, in order not to let down appearances. But as time passes, they begin to lose respect, to be coarse, offensive, intolerant and thoughtless, behaving in such a way as to make it clear they have fallen out with each other. However, they try not to let on to those around them. Nonetheless, everyone is actually well aware of the situation, and this phenomenon is regarded as a natural process. An interesting indication of this is the way that the first days of marriage are called the honeymoon. Clearly the honeymoon will soon come to an end, and years full of exasperation, trouble and even conflict will begin.

As the marriage moves on, general problems such as children and making ends meet, and the psychology problems these engender, come to dominate. Constant tension and limited relations between the members of the household are experienced. Money is a constant subject of argument. Matters such as control and jealousy between husband and wife give rise to tension and conflict. The man constantly talks about work, he never listens to his wife and constantly watches the television and is uninterested in or bad-tempered toward their children. This constitutes the natural climate of the household.

Untidiness generally prevails. Little attention is paid to cleanliness. That is why married people do not want their homes to be seen under normal conditions. The furniture, accessories, tablecloths etc. in the house are arranged not for the comfort of those living there, but in order to be appreciated by others. A separate room is set aside

for guests. Those living in the house do not generally use that part of the house used for show. The most expensive and best-quality items in the house are exhibited there for the benefit of guests.

Apart from the house, the children are the main element of display. Indeed, there is an enormous distortion in the attitude towards children right from the outset. Mother and father imagine that they own their children, as if they had given them life. Nobody thinks that it is really Allah Who creates and is the true Lord of everything. Parents who assume ownership of their children then begin frequently referring to how intelligent or attractive their children are, and boast of the fact, as if their children's beauty or intelligence actually stemmed from them. They even take credit for any positive features in their children by saying, "Of course he takes after me." This showing off by means of the children increases as time passes. The schools they attend, their circle of friends and the places they visit are all described to everyone. In addition to boasting through one's children, the custom of making them the sole purpose and meaning of one's life is also widespread among families of the Religion of the Ignorant.

Some parents regard their children as their sole reason for living, and claim that they have devoted their entire lives to preparing a better future for them. The fact is, however, that the sole aim of every human life is to serve Allah. Life is to be devoted solely to Allah. Caring for one's children is a form of religious observance to be performed solely for His approval.

Women's entire lives are focused on the aim of getting married. From earliest childhood, this objective is held up as the most important goal in life. Girls regulate their weight, clothes, education, tastes and acquaintances in the hope of an advantageous marriage. A great many girls go to university to "find a husband," because an educated

husband, especially a successful one, is seen as a guarantee in life. In her dreams, a young girl establishes a model husband who will maintain, protect and watch over her, and so spends her youth looking for him. The fact is, however, as revealed in the Qur'an, that it is Allah, and Him only Who feeds and protects people, and Who is worthy of one's hopes of assistance.

Within this logic, marriage ceases to be a legitimate manner of expressing love between two people and turns into an institution—by which name it is often referred to. The lovelessness, lack of respect and behavioral defects that soon arise give couples the feeling that they have made a mistake. Yet there is now generally no turning back. Even if there were, that would be no solution. Just like marriage itself, divorce will take place according to the requirements of Ignorantism, and the life that follows will be led according to those same requirements.

If an error is to be found, it needs to be sought not in isolated events, but in the false philosophy underneath them, on which the entire distorted system is erected, and which leads people to unhappiness, disappointment and loss in every situation—in other words, in the Religion of the Ignorant itself.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF "FEMININITY" IN IGNORANTISM

One of the most important suggestions that the religion of the ignorant inculcates in society is the various personal and mental structures identified by that religion and imposed on to people according to their gender. Among believers, however, character does not change according to gender. There is one common soul among the faithful. But in Ignorantism, one's character changes according to a person's gender, under the effect of an artificial distinction and social propaganda.

As a result of powerful indoctrination by the Religion of the Ignorant, women have assumed a rather weak character and a less than fully competent nature. Qualities like courage, intelligence, determination, agility, reason, competence and resistance to trouble and difficulty have no place in the roles set out for women in Ignorantism. And even where these are present, they are always faint and faulty. Both men and women share the prejudiced view that all these good characteristics need to be present in men. Elements such as jealousy, capriciousness, complaining, helplessness and sentimentality have always been defined as feminine.

The Religion of the Ignorant imposes a burden on women in the form of helplessness, irrationality, ignorance, naiveté and incompetence. In the light of the rules of this religion, women assume that appearance and, willingly or not, accept the obligation to reflect

those defects. That state of mind imposed on women causes a very different personality to emerge, with all the attendant attitudes and behavior. The subconscious idea has been planted that these spiritual and psychological weaknesses are natural, part and parcel of being a woman. Women who adopt the role of irrationality, ignorance and incompetence shaped by society gradually *do* become genuinely irrational, ignorant and incompetent.

In the eyes of this religion, the aspects of women that need to be brought to the fore are those that make them female, such as facial and bodily beauty—rather than intellectual and spiritual beauty—, and sentimentality. Even those who believe themselves members of the most cultured and contemporary section of society still abide by this rule.

Distorted views and moral values peculiar to Ignorantism are constructed around this fundamental logic.

Inability to think heads the list of the characteristics prescribed by the Religion of the Ignorant. A woman who has adopted this belief therefore feels no need to exercise her mind on any subject. By making use of others' thoughts, she is unable to offer a solution on any matter, but merely implements those put before her. If her family falls on economic hard times, she will leave the solution to her husband to find. She herself, however, will offer no alternative as to what will be most advantageous to them or how they should go about making ends meet. She will see herself as being totally outside the issue, beyond accusing her husband of not bringing home enough money.

In Ignorantism, the female character is closed to development and progress. For that reason, a great many women make no effort to enhance their culture, abilities or experience. They tend not to follow scientific developments, technology, the economy or politics.

The only fields of interest left to them are their own appearance, clothes, or makeup or matters to do with their domestic happiness.

Even faith is offered ready-made in the Religion of the Ignorant. A woman will shape her own belief in the direction of whatever her husband believes. If her intended spouse is a religious man, she will start taking an interest in religion. If he has no faith or behaves flexibly with regard to Allah's commandments, she will again begin living like him, even if in her heart of hearts she is aware of Allah's existence. She completely adopts the logical framework, perspective, tastes, world view and other judgments of her betrothed, and spends the rest of her life accordingly. For that reason, most women who live by Ignorantism have no understanding of right and wrong of their own. They set out a path for themselves by adopting the value judgments of their husband, of their boyfriend, or of their parents.

In order to survive, women who live by this religion need support and protection. Indeed, they generally do not protect any weak and despairing people around them, nor strive on their behalf. They protect nobody, but are protected themselves, and make an effort for nobody, though others strive for the sake of their comfort.

Fear is another component of this superstitious religion's females. Many women think they need to exhibit fearful reactions in situations where they are not actually fearful at all. They scream theatrically, cover their faces with their hands, and appear to be very excited. For example, a woman who goes to a horror film may act as if she is very frightened, though in reality she is quite unaffected. She may exhibit sudden and exaggerated reactions in the face of incidents that have nothing frightening about them at all, which even a child could face with courage. The society of the ignorant believes that fear becomes a woman, or is a requirement of being one. The

fact is, though, no entity or phenomenon is to be feared apart from Allah. All people are responsible for realizing that fact and (with the exception of physical reflexes) sincerely abiding by it.

Another feature set out for women by the society of the ignorant is, as already mentioned, a lack of manual dexterity. Many women are raised from early childhood to believe themselves untalented. For that reason, their physical coordination is poor and they feel no need to improve it. For example, it is regarded as perfectly normal for a woman not to learn how a broken appliance can be repaired or to understand how complex devices work. It is regarded as normal for her to fail at changing a flat tire or many other jobs requiring physical coordination. Yet this totally artificial trait is imposed on women by the Religion of the Ignorant. Many women are actually exceedingly competent and practically minded, and fail only at activities of this sort because this propaganda makes them believe they lack ability. It is of course natural that they should be unable to perform tasks exceeding their physical strength, but everything else is a result of their indoctrination.

Ignorantism's view of women is a most belittling one. From early childhood, women in the Religion of the Ignorant are fed such ideas as "If you don't learn to be a good cook, if you are slovenly, if you don't study, you'll never get married. If you don't look after your appearance, you'll find yourself left on the shelf." In sending their daughters to private schools, teaching them etiquette, and encouraging them to read books, play a musical instrument or take an interest in art, the only thing families think about is their making a good marriage. Therefore, when a girl grows up accustomed to seeing herself in that light from her earliest youth, she will want all these attributes to be recompensed in material form. Therefore, money is always of prime importance to such women. They never

want to marry anyone who can't reward them for the attributes they possess in material ways. They imagine that they'll be "wasted," as they put it, in unions of such types. Therefore, if the husband of an Ignorantist woman doesn't earn enough money, this inevitably becomes the subject of conflict. She complains that she is undervalued, by his failing to look after her properly. Why did she marry him when she could have had someone else? Why did she ruin her life by marrying him? That is why, in the Religion of the Ignorant, the subject of money is always a problem in marriages.

The character of women in the society of the ignorant is described as intrigue-loving and cunning in many verses of the Qur'an. One verse concerns the actions of the woman who had the Prophet Yusuf (as) thrown into prison because of her intrigues:

He saw the shirt torn at the back and said, "The source of this is women's deviousness. Without a doubt your guile is very great." (Surah Yusuf, 28)

"Feminine wiles," as they are commonly referred to, are based on hypocrisy and deceiving others. Ignorantism, however, has established a model that legitimizes the way that a woman gives the impression that she is naïve and innocent to soften a man's heart, or fills her eyes with tears and starts weeping when she wants him to do something. She spreads gossip about a woman she is jealous of, seeming to praise her while actually running her down. She adopts a cold, uninterested air so the others should take an interest in her and to show how valuable she is, and gives the impression that, despite her own wishes, she is sought after and a subject of interest. Never calling her boyfriend on the phone or asking after his well-being, and not being joyful and chatty—all are all feminine tactics in the Religion of the Ignorant. A young girl will be seen more often with other male friends in order to make her boyfriend jealous,

adopting a greater interest in the men around her, pretending to be interested in someone in whom she really isn't—all this is part and parcel of the feminine wiles she has learned since childhood.

The female character of Ignorantism is built on fundamental guile. Therefore, a woman raised in that belief can actually develop a very cruel nature while appearing to be tearful, soft and innocent. She may shed floods of tears in order to obtain more money from her husband who is experiencing financial difficulties. She may resort to caprices and initiate conflict to obtain an expensive new outfit. Adding further to the burdens of someone already in a difficult situation solely for one's own comfort and interests, while appearing on the surface to be so sensitive, is exceptionally cruel behavior.

One can also frequently encounter women in the Religion of the Ignorant who join with other women to plan how to rule their husbands. This is a behavioral defect entirely directed by satan. They determine a policy aimed at governing their husbands through specific tactics they learn from one another. They give one another advice such as, "Make him his favorite dinner. Be pleasant and tell him how much the new dress you want costs while he is watching his favorite program. Or first make him a cup of tea, light his cigarette, chat about this and that. And then once he is relaxed, get around to the subject at hand." These are the strategies such women set out in their husbands' absence. Among the intrigues women teach one another is such insincere advice as, "If you want to make him jealous, get dressed up, go out and come home late. Don't pay him too much attention if you want to keep him interested. The more interest you show in him, the quicker he'll cheat on you."

Ignorantism encourages people to have different mindsets and psychologies, according to their physical traits and differences. In contrast, the religion described in the Qur'an directs people to have

one perfect state of mind, an ideal personality and a superior moral understanding, with no regard to gender. Different moral and psychological models envisaged for men and women have no place in the religion of Allah. This is frequently emphasized in the Qur'an. In total contrast to the Religion of the Ignorant, it is revealed that both men and women of faith possess the single, common and ideal moral values and character of the believer:

Men and women who are Muslims, men and women who are believers, men and women who are obedient, men and women who are truthful, men and women who are steadfast, men and women who are humble, men and women who give charity, men and women who fast, men and women who guard their chastity, men and women who remember Allah much: Allah has prepared forgiveness for them and an immense reward. (Surat al-Ahzab, 35)

The men and women of the believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and perform prayer and give the alms, and obey Allah and His messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 71)

As stated above, there may be such social arrangements as division of labor and sharing of responsibilities based on the physical differences between men and women. These do not justify, however, contrary to everyone's conception—and consisting entirely of the indoctrination of Ignorantism—such gender distinctions as women cooking, doing the dishes and washing clothes. There is no special responsibility imposed on women on this subject in Islam. Allah has revealed that there is no distinction between men and women:

Their Lord responds to them: "I will not let the deeds of any

doer among you go to waste, male or female—you are both the same in that respect. Those who migrated and were driven from their homes and suffered harm in My way and fought and were killed, I will erase their bad actions from them and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, as a reward from Allah. The best of all rewards is with Allah." (Surah Al 'Imran, 195)

In conclusion, the most rational solution is for men and women to come to an understanding and organize jobs of all kinds between themselves.

It is of course inappropriate, in the absence of a particular necessity, for women to undertake heavy labor and work like construction and lifting heavy loads that exceeds their physical capacities. Yet to interpret that to mean that women are helpless, deficient beings in need of assistance and to indoctrinate them into that mindset is the product of the Religion of the Ignorant, which contains indoctrination, direct or indirect, to the effect that women, created physically weaker, should also have weaker characters. The fact is that there is no difference between men and women, apart from the strength of their muscles. Men and women have the same responsibilities in the sight of Allah, and will both be called to account.

The model of helplessness proposed by Ignorantism turns a woman capable of acting perfectly normally, healthily, rationally and consistently, into an object of pity. Gradually, that helplessness becomes part of her character.

The woman of the Religion of the Ignorant is therefore far removed from the noble, upright and rational behavior unique to the female believer. The female character shaped by this religion contains just about all the personality defects and abnormalities that

male and female believers should avoid, as described in the Qur'an.

THE AFFECTED FEMALE CHARACTER

The term "*affected*," employed to describe a particular type of human, is actually one of the varieties of character of the Ignorantist. Although its traits all violate religious moral values, it has received wide public acceptance and even respect in certain circles. The reason may be that all of this character's negative aspects have not been openly and logically compared with the moral values of the Qur'an, and have not been fully laid out for people to see. However, in this section, you will witness how people far removed from the moral values of the Qur'an implement this character with all its defects.

The Affected Character Is Built on a Facade

One of the main features of the affected personality is how the individuals who bear it never uses their true mindset or personality. Their entire lives are built on affectation. They never react to events in a genuine or sincere way. They never reveal genuine love, say what they really think, or speak to reveal their true state of mind.

Affectation is the principal trait of those who possess a false spirit. For example, a person with an affected character may appear to be very distressed in the face of an event which actually touches her not at all. Despite actually feeling nothing inside, she may try to give the impression of how upsetting the event was by such expressions as "Oh dear! Whatever happened next?" and "How terrible!" In reacting in that way, also affected are her tone of voice, looks, facial expression, gestures and even posture. Such a person may never once have revealed her true face, spoken with her true voice or reflected her authentic personality even to close friends with whom she has spent the previous 40 years.

Someone with an affected character never feels or displays true love for anyone else, because selfishness predominates alongside affectation. The person most loved by someone with such a nature is herself. She likes herself much more than she does anyone else. She believes herself to be more intelligent and cultured than anyone else, and attaches no importance to anyone else, including her children, spouse and parents. She is therefore unable to approach anyone with a genuine, sincere love. Any displays of affection are therefore a façade. She never, for example, embraces the person in front of her, compliments others, or mentions their positive traits in a genuine manner. People of this kind usually praise the other person's outfit, and ask where they got it and what it cost. Or they may like a particular hairstyle and ask where the person had it done. A piece of jewelry may attract their attention, and they will compliment that. Yet they never praise another's moral virtues, or the attractive aspects of their appearance. They never refer to humility, compassion, patience, conscience, fear of Allah or generosity. Neither do they wish to give people's physical features any pre-eminence. They are thus unable to show love and win people's hearts.

People with such a character always have two faces, two tones of voice and two personalities. One belongs to themselves, the other is the one they show to the outside world. They never, for example, possess the honesty to tell others what is in their heart at that moment. Even if they do not love someone, they may still put on a false show of affection. They may fraudulently talk about how cultured someone is, when they actually believe him to be ignorant, or rain down praises on an outfit they don't care for. It is generally impossible to have any faith in their words. One cannot seek their advice, because they will inevitably conceal their true thoughts and say what is appropriate to the circumstances. Neither is their joy natural

and sincere. They smile not because something gives them genuine pleasure or because they are happy, but because they think they need to. They wear smiles though their hearts are troubled and distressed. They never let their happy appearance drop—if such is in their interests—even with people whose company they don't enjoy, no matter how bored they are. They can utter false laughter in situations where their pride is offended, when they feel belittled, or where they are disparaged.

People with an Affected Character Pay Little Attention to Cleanliness

From the outside, such people may seem to be rather well groomed, because display occupies an important place in the affected personality. As in all matters, however, these people's understanding of cleanliness is directed only towards display. They live quite filthy lives in those areas nobody can see. Cleanliness is merely a troublesome chore performed to gain others' esteem. According to this mindset, therefore, there is no need to be clean if there is nobody around.

In the homes of people with an affected character, close attention is paid only to cleanliness in the guest room. Only the visible parts of that room are actually cleaned. At first glance the armchairs look very clean, but the backs have in all likelihood not been wiped down for months and everywhere is covered in dust. The radiator covers are clean, but when you remove them, the sight that emerges is exceedingly primitive. There may be places in such homes that have not been touched for years. Dirty areas include neglected places containing old furniture, cupboards, underneath the carpets and the bathroom walls, generally harboring germs.

Most important of all, however, is the lack of attention such

people pay to personal cleanliness. One distinguishing feature of those people is how they seek to cover up the dirt on their bodies, that have not been washed for days, by spraying scent over them. Though accompanied by the scents of attractive and expensive perfumes, these people have generally not come into contact with water for days. After visiting the hairdresser, they don't wash their hair for some time, in order to avoid having to pay any more money and to keep their hairdo intact. Before going out, they wash only the visible parts of their bodies, and ignore the regions under their clothes. They are therefore frequently subjected to infections, but live with these illnesses for years without ever being concerned about them. They pay no heed to the cleanliness of the food they serve people, and they generally try to keep down costs by serving poorly-washed vegetables, ancient oils, and stale ingredients mixed with fresh ones. They don't hesitate to endanger others' health for the sake of their own interests. Indeed, it never even crosses their minds that this unclean food could damage people's health. Any such person eventually becomes used to filth, and regards this as the natural order of things.

All this stems from the fact that the affected character is built on an unbelieving system. They never employ their consciences, and are never clean, altruistic and considerate as commanded by Allah, unless forced to be.

Their Views of Religion

In the affected personality, religion is perceived very differently from the manner described in the Qur'an. For many with such a character, religious belief stems not from devotion to Allah but from a desire for social acceptance. For them, being religious needs to be practiced as a general rule of society. Such people therefore use devo-

tion as a means of display. They sometimes remember Allah, and say that they believe in Him and accept the Qur'an, but fail to adopt the relevant moral values and lifestyle. Allah has revealed the existence of such people in the Qur'an. In verses, Allah says:

Have you seen him who denies the religion? He is the one who harshly rebuffs the orphan and does not urge the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who perform prayer, and are forgetful of their prayer, those who show off and deny help to others. (Surat al-Ma'un, 1-7)

These characters have a distorted understanding of religion, peculiar to itself and far removed from the Qur'an. Even if they say they are religious, they are actually very flexible on the subject of what is permitted and prohibited in the religion. They don't tremble in fear of Allah as they should. They therefore abide by those religious provisions that seem easy to them, and ignore those that seem difficult or incompatible with their interests. For example, they perform one daily prayer, but if invited to a party or feel sleepy, or need to go shopping at the other times of day, they come up with a new provision and may say, "Once is enough, there is no need to perform them all." Or they may reach such an erroneous conclusion as, "It's my intention that counts, not my actions."

In this character, religion enters the equation only on specific days, alongside specific people or during specific events. For example, during funerals or the Mawlid, people with affected personalities bring up religion, because such occasions are opportunities to show how devout they are. Praying for the dead or raising the subject of their lives in the Hereafter are important to demonstrate the importance they attach to religion. This is of course praiseworthy behavior if performed with sincere intentions, but the difference is that in speaking of the dead and the Hereafter or praying for them,

people with affected characters forget about Allah, regard death and the Hereafter as being far removed, and seek only to put on a show for those around them.

In fact, most of those who live by the affected philosophy put on a thin headscarf on occasions of this kind, wear predominantly black elegant and expensive clothes and head off to the funeral. Where they see the relatives of the deceased, they assume a sorrowful expression and express their condolences with sorrowful words. Reference is made to the deceased's "time" having come and to wishing healthy lives for those who remain. As this takes place, however, there is no state of mind that feels helplessness before Allah, that knows that death is close at hand to this person as well, and that fears having to render account. On the contrary, the funeral is perceived as a social meeting, albeit with a different form and rules. Competitiveness in looking elegant and gossiping continue here, too. Who has attended? Who is wearing what? Who is wearing what brand of headscarf and what make of glasses?

The mind of the affected character is the exact opposite of that brought about by religion. Affected people may appear to remember Allah frequently, especially at times of accidents, sickness or events they regard as important to themselves. Yet they never think that Allah pervades and enfolds all places, has dominion over them at all moments, of the responsibilities religion imposes on them, or of Allah's punishment, justice or might. They may never think of acquiring any understanding on these subjects. They generally do not know what is written in the Qur'an or the moral values it commands, and if they do know, they certainly do not practice them.

It is actually very easy to spot this aspect of the affected personality. If asked to make a sacrifice for Allah's approval, then these mentalities will probably rise to the surface. Such people are unwill-

ing to undertake even the slightest difficulty for the sake of Allah's approval. They cannot countenance renouncing their lifestyles, luxuries or surroundings. For example, if they think that there will be a reaction from others as they perform a religious obligation, they choose other people's approval over Allah's. They never make any concession for the sake of religion with regard to their wealth, entertainments, travel, ways of dressing or habits.

The fact is, religion must influence a person's whole life and moral values. Those who believe in Allah live their entire lives according to His religion and compatibly with His approval, and practice the moral values of the Qur'an. They never evaluate the religion of Allah according to whether it is compatible with their own interests. When that evaluation occurs, then that is not true religion. The view of religion in the affected character, therefore, is far distant from the spirit and logic of Islam. In verses, Allah states that religion must be made unique to Him:

We have sent down the Book to you with truth. So worship Allah, making your religion sincerely His. Indeed is the sincere religion not Allah's alone? If people take protectors besides Him—"We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah"—Allah will judge between them regarding the things about which they differed. Allah does not guide anyone who is an ungrateful liar. (Surat az-Zumar, 2-3)

Say: "It is Allah I worship, making my religion sincerely His, so worship anything you will apart from Him!" Say: "The real losers are those who lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection." Isn't that clear loss? (Surat az-Zumar, 14-15)

So call upon Allah, making your religion sincerely His,

even though the disbelievers detest it. (Surah Ghafir, 14)

They Never Abandon Their Affected Characters, Even Under the Most Difficult Conditions

Another feature of the affected character is how it dominates peoples' entire lives. That dominion is so powerful that such people never abandon their own rules, even under the most difficult conditions. Funerals are, again, an example of this. Even at the deaths of their closest friends, even of their husbands or children, such people are never willing to forego their characters, which are the direct opposites of the moral values of the Qur'an.

Since such people never use their ability to reason, they cannot fully comprehend the might and greatness of Allah, which is why they do not fear Him. Just about no event affects them particularly deeply, nor leads them to behave with genuine sincerity. Such events as a close friend contracting a dangerous illness, their children being injured or their spouse coming close to death, produce no deep effect in their souls. They never learn from people's experiences. They never think that one day, something similar might happen to them, and never seek to improve their moral values and rectify their mistakes.

The one event that affected characters cannot withstand and at which they totally collapse is their own deaths. To die is the one thing they fear most, and experience terror when they feel that death is really close at hand. Only then do they abandon their ugly personalities and show their true faces. The panic felt when an earthquake strikes, for instance, may lead them to abandon their affected character. At such a moment, their facial expressions, tone of voice, behavior and way of calling on Allah all suddenly change. Such people know their helplessness, are humble, full of fear, gen-

uine and sincere. The moment the earthquake ends, however, that effect suddenly vanishes and the affected characters re-appear. That is because the force that caused their character to change, albeit for a moment, is not fear of Allah but fear of death. Once that fear has passed, this character re-emerges in all its ugliness.

The Affected Character Gives Rise to Sloth, Incompetence and Ignorance

Affected people tend to be skilled at nothing, have no competence in any field, and are ignorant. The world offered to people of that character is a very narrow one. They take an interest only in certain areas of life and know nothing about anything beyond.

Affected people are interested in such matters as clothes, make-up, brands of perfume, the private lives of those around them, travel plans and hairdressers' addresses. Little else is of any deep interest. They have not the slightest interest in the torture inflicted on Muslims in East Turkistan, for instance, the cruelty experienced in the Middle East, people starving to death in Africa, the spread of atheism in the world, the abandonment of Qur'anic moral values or the moral degeneration among young people. They are sensitive only to their own interests. The problems of others, even of their closest friends, interest them not at all. They take an interest in a subject only if it affects their interests in some way.

Unless they or one of their family fall ill, they never feel sympathy for the sick. So long as they are not poor, they never empathize with the plight of poor people. So long as they are not hungry, they do not comprehend the plight of those who are. In order for them to show any sensitivity on a subject, they must first experience it themselves. No subject that fails to touch them personally or cause them any discomfort is at all important. Their seeking to solve a problem,

making efforts to save those suffering from that problem and find a solution all depend on the situation being harmful to them. If they live in a country at war or suffering starvation, and they themselves are affected, then they may well look for a remedy, because their own lives are involved. But if they live in luxury far from such countries, then the plight of those people interests them not in the least. In that sense, the affected character is most ruthless and cruel.

Moreover, since the culture presented by the affected personality is solely for display, these people are exceedingly ignorant and badly informed. They devote all their time and mind to show off. Therefore, the affected are unable to come up with ideas on subjects requiring intellect. They cannot be of any use to those around them, and fail to add anything positive to their surroundings. In fact, people of affected character are generally a burden on rational people at times of emergencies and constitute a problem. Since they are irrational and incompetent, and of no use when measures need to be taken, time needs to be set aside to look after them. For example, instead of calling a doctor or dealing with bystanders after a traffic accident, such people actually confuse the situation further by crying and engaging in mindless behavior. They do not use their reason to come up with solutions. For that reason, not only are such people a danger to themselves, but also to those around them.

Because affected personalities have no objective, ideals or auspicious aims, their lives are dominated by a great lethargy. Apart from dashing off to some entertainment, the hairdresser, a sports event, shopping or to visit a friend, there's never any urgency to any of their affairs. Their haste is concerned solely with themselves. They never hurry for the sake of others' welfare, health or security. Time is of little value to them, and they waste it quite happily. They

can spend days, months and even years without doing anything useful, interested only in themselves and their own particular circle. They therefore move slowly, talk at length on all subjects, and are unable to come up with a quick solution to the smallest matter. For example, it takes them weeks or even months to decide on a change of décor in their homes. They are also capable of devoting days to such questions as what outfit to wear, what hair style to adopt, what jewelry to wear, or which shoes to buy.

This lethargy imposed by their character is reflected in their mental activities. Their minds work slowly. They cannot easily distinguish right from wrong, speak with any wisdom or use their intellect to make positive contributions to anyone's moral values, personality or lifestyle.

The Vulgarity of the Affected Character

One major claim of people with an affected personality is that of nobility. These people, imagining that nobility consists of appearance, attitude and various rules of etiquette, portray themselves as exceedingly noble to those around them. They imagine that wealth brings with it a natural nobility, which they can achieve by learning a few international conventions regarding eating, standing up, and dressing.

In fact, however, beneath such people's courteous exteriors there tends to lie a character that's cruel, vulgar and a far cry from noble. The attitudes they display in the face of events that clash with their own interests, or toward people to whom they attach little value, make this crystal clear. For example, when affected people regarded as exceptionally courteous in their circle lose their bag in a shop, they begin behaving in a most vulgar manner. They shout at

the staff, and immediately accuse people of theft. They demand the bag be found at once, otherwise they will sue. They shout at people who have nothing to do with the matter, quite irrationally and in a very vulgar tone of voice. At that moment, their fine manners and nobility vanish. Their true natures emerge when they imagine their own interests will be damaged.

A great many examples can be given of how such matters as compassion, nobility and courtesy are based solely on imitation in the affected character. For instance, such people will be full of affection towards the child of a friend who comes on a visit. They will place the child on their lap, caress it, lavish attention on it or take care that no harm comes to it. But when the child of a poor person arrives, their attitude is quite different. They are reluctant for that child to sit on the living room furniture, to eat off good plates, or to wander about the house. They are reluctant to touch or caress it. They display no kindness, but behave with great ill temper.

People with such a nature are unable to put up with any changes to their lifestyle, for which reason they are angered easily. Imagine such people all dressed up and trying to make it to a party where they've been invited. They speak and behave most politely to those around, but if they're unable to find a space left in the parking lot, their attitude suddenly changes. When they realize they must park some distance away and walk, they start blaming the parking attendant. They try to get their own way by humiliating him. If their persistence fails to achieve results, they become rude, and their manner of speaking and tone of voice undergo an alteration. No vulgarity is too much for them, since the affected personality's nobility is based solely on appearance.

True nobility stems from faith and is lived in the soul. Only one who has faith in Allah, expects to be recompensed for all things by

Him, and lives the beauty of the soul required by Qur'anic moral values, can possess true nobility and greatness. Such a person will behave in an honorable, noble, generous and dignified manner, without chasing after personal interests, in a manner that doesn't change according to the circumstances or persons concerned. In the Qur'an, Allah reveals that true nobility and honor belong to Allah and those who follow Him:

They say, "If we return to Madina, the more honorable will drive out the inferior." But all honor belongs to Allah and to His messenger and the believers. But the hypocrites do not know this. (Surat al-Munafiqun, 8)

Do those who take the disbelievers as protectors, rather than the believers, hope to find honor with them? Honor belongs entirely to Allah. (Surat an-Nisa', 139)

"WORK" PSYCHOLOGY IN IGNORANTISM

Earlier, we said that a Muslim's only important feature of identity was being a Muslim, that he cannot define himself according to any other worldly criterion. *Muslim* is a name Allah has bestowed on believers (Surat al-Hajj, 78), and a great honor it is for a person to bear that title. For that reason, those with a Muslim awareness never seek to find another identity by adopting other values. They would never stoop to doing so. Other worldly criteria—a person's descent, lineage, social status, language, color or circle for instance—have no importance in the sight of believers. This is explained in a verse:

O humanity! We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest among you in Allah's sight is the one of you who best performs his duty. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Surat al-Hujurat, 13)

A believer aware of this never changes his behavior or character according to prevailing worldly circumstances. When he obtains great worldly wealth, for example, he never becomes spoiled. When he is impoverished, he never adopts a defeated state of mind. Examples of this are provided in the Qur'an; and the way in which the Prophet Sulayman (as) maintained his modesty and submission to Allah after acquiring great material wealth is described. On the

other hand, however, people with weak and ignoble characters change according to every circumstance and condition.

The unseemly behavior of Qarun, who grew proud when property was given him, or of other unbelievers who panicked and despaired in the face of the slightest difficulty, are examples of such behavior, as described in the verse:

When We bless man, he turns away and draws aside. When evil touches him, he despairs. (Surat al-Isra', 83)

This lack of a firm identity engrained in the character of unbelievers emerges in the Religion of the Ignorant as an attempt to find identity. That is because the Ignorantist is all about attaining status in society. Since members of the Religion of the Ignorant possess no genuine, unchanging and stable identity in the way that Muslims do, they set out various worldly identities for themselves.

The most significant of these is professions. Adherents of Ignorantism find an identity in terms of the professions they belong to, and develop a character appropriate to them. Muslims have professions too, of course, but their place of work or status do not determine the characters of people with sincere faith in Allah. Muslims do not enter the state of mind that their profession brings with it, and never make any concessions on their attitudes.

In the Religion of the Ignorant, people are only as valuable as their professions. People enjoy as much esteem as the money they earn. That is why, within minutes of meeting someone, the conversation turns to what work they or their fathers do. Establishing that is of great importance in terms of establishing the other party's worth. The criterion by whether a person is to be taken seriously is their career, income or rank. When people from different professional groups meet together, everyone generally seeks to imply that he has the most highly regarded profession, and that the others' are

less important.

In Ignorantism, every profession has its own particular psychology. If it requires higher education, then its psychology will consist of the individual's having been to university, and indoctrination starts with teachers and senior students.

Doctors, for instance, are indoctrinated from the moment they enter their medical studies with the idea that everyone's health depends on them, and that theirs is the most sacred profession. They carry that mindset throughout their lives. Pharmacists develop a similar psychology. Those who graduate from law school regard themselves as fundamental pillars of justice, as the most intelligent and clever people around, with the best powers of judgment, the best able to determine the true facts. Engineers think that everything they encounter in daily life is the product of their profession, and, based on that thesis, that their own role is a most exceptional one.

The self-employed and those engaging in commerce see themselves as the backbone of social and economic life and imagine that nobody can take their place. At every opportunity, they raise the idea that were it not for them, people would be in a dire state, even unable to survive—and that they themselves are very important.

These people construct their identities and characters on such psychological bases as arrogance, pride, stubbornness and self-admiration brought about by the feeling that their work is irreplaceable, sacred, exceptional and unique. Members of the Religion of the Ignorant are therefore very sensitive about their own professions. They regard every word spoken about their profession as if it were aimed at them personally, and defend their professions as if it were a matter of honor.

Professions that require no education, that are based more on physical skills or experience, on knowledge passed down from rela-

tives or physical ability, have their own different psychologies. Workplaces such as studios, shops, boutiques and offices all have their own very different psychologies and ethical conceptions, determined by Ignorantism. The external manifestation of the pride, arrogance and egoism of those working such jobs takes place more in the form of inferiority complexes, caprices, aggression, bad temper, vulgarity and a know-it-all attitude.

The work ethic of the Religion of the Ignorant reveals itself even while people are looking for employment. The most important, even the sole criterion when seeking work is the salary that job will bring in. The point of the work—its purpose, which belief, idea or individual will be served, and the harm it may do—are never made part of the equation.

In Ignorantism, one job often chosen by women is secretarial work. Their boss is usually a man, who tends to look for female secretaries. Femininity tends to play a major role here. Potential employees seek to get hired by means of their external appearance, rather than with their competence, knowledge, experience or intelligence.

Bosses tend to select employees who will witness their every move, either at work or at home, with the greatest care. For that reason the secretary, male or female, hears and sees nothing. He or she must have the kind of character that can lie when necessary, but must never lie to the boss and must demonstrate the highest loyalty. In normal life, people are unwilling to witness a deception and remain silent, or even become a party to it. When the same happens within the boundaries of the workplace, however, the Religion of the Ignorant regards this as part and parcel of the job. This aspect of being a secretary is a moral requirement of the profession in community of the ignorant. Nobody finds it strange.

Secretaries gain the boss's trust by ignoring his secret dealings in the workplace, even sometimes with regard to his own family. They share with the boss common attitudes toward everyone outside. Secretaries also put on a show with the boss for the outside world. His going on business trips, his outside meetings, and the salary he earns are all elements for display.

Other jobs like marketing, sales or reception are other trades based on show. Bosses inspect candidates in meeting rooms and monitor their reactions by making vulgar and crude jokes. Not showing an adverse reaction is a plus.

Some of the attributes sought in jobs like these, which involve dealing with many different people, include an ability not to blush in the face of other people's words or behavior, keeping one's cool, never taking things to heart, and even suggesting that one enjoys such things. The character of staff who make closing sales is particularly well suited to this; and is a requirement of the sales staff's work ethic. Vulgar personality traits such as shamelessness, insensitivity and lack of character are all part of the work ethic of Ignorantism. Among believers, on the other hand, that ethic promotes superior moral values such as dignity, seriousness, honor and nobility.

Passion constitutes the bedrock of the behavior required in the workplace in the Religion of the Ignorant. A burning desire to earn money, a passion to lead, or a passion for fame are highly regarded. That's why a materialist atmosphere to a large extent pervades workplaces. All behavior and attitudes, all conversation, are aimed at obtaining money and position. Employees have specific duties and positions. Everyone conforms to the mould of their own job description. The general behavior of most employees is ruled by giving the appearance of being very busy, irritable behavior, a tense expression and haste.

The Ignorantist boss speaks and behaves with the ease imparted by being the proprietor or the one who hands out wages. He can shout at, insult or humiliate the person in front of him. He is the one who hands out money. He needn't show the same respect to those beneath him as he does to others. He does, however, expect great respect to be shown to him. Those under his command must put up with everything he does. There is a kind of slave logic in the relationship between employer and employee. The boss imagines that he has freedom to behave however he likes to anyone whose salary he pays, and to address and use him as he chooses.

Business terminology is employed even in normal office conversations. In foreign countries, English terminology from the profession concerned is constantly employed—appropriately or not and whether the other party understands or not—as a means of putting on airs. There are even ways of holding the telephone. Disapproving of one another's work and constantly correcting it in a know-it-all way are widespread among employees. There is intense internal office gossip. Longstanding employees know all one another's deceptions, but hesitate to bring them out into the open because they fear that their own misdeeds will similarly be dragged into the light of day.

Everyone loads pressure onto newcomers, acting as know-it-alls and treating them as beginners, and constantly watching for their mistakes. Someone who's been employed for only two weeks tries to lord it over the brand-new employee. Longstanding workers give newcomers advice on all sorts of matters, necessary or otherwise, and try to make their superiority felt on all matters. Sometimes there can be disputes between different departments in the workplace. People show off by saying, "I have sorted that job out," and try to give the impression of being highly competent.

The prevailing psychology in such workplaces as shops, stores and boutiques is no different. Shop staff tend to act as if they owned the store, even though none of the goods in it actually belong to them. That stems from the state of mind wherein everyone else is buying and they are selling. Employees experience the burden of being there only as sales staff. If they perceive that the customer is not well-off, they show them goods as if throwing them down, in an uninterested and cold tone of voice, and exhibit a constantly irritated air. They first try to be courteous, but if they feel that the customer is unwilling or unable to buy what they want to sell, immediately they become rude and begin ignoring the customer, talking to their friends or staring outside. They give rude answers, as if the customer is imposing on their time. In workplaces of this kind, time generally passes in hollow and pointless dialogues, watching the outside world through the window, and gazing at oneself in the mirror.

In public offices, there is a rather more stereotyped state of mind. The irritable, tense climate in such places is accepted by everyone. A great many employees combine arrogance with a sense of inferiority. Their word counts for anything only in their field of work. They therefore adopt a harsh, even domineering attitude towards those who have business with them. One sees cups of tea being constantly emptied and refilled, a thick fog of cigarette smoke, employees complaining how hard it is to make ends meet, family problems and shopping, and carry out their work with a listless air.

The employees' tone of voice and bad temper make it clear they cannot stand the work they do. The suppliant must be constantly pleasant to those who will actually be doing the work. Asking too many questions may irritate them. In all probability, no reply will be forthcoming to the questions he asks, which are silenced with a

harsh look. One can even hear reprimands the whole time.

However, this image of the difficult, bad tempered, know-it-all civil servant in public offices emerges only in the presence of poor, ignorant or oppressed people who come to the office. In contrast, civil servants who are members of the Religion of the Ignorant never display that kind of behavior before wealthy, well-dressed people of high rank. On the contrary, they treat them with the greatest respect, even though this is generally not a genuine, but a vulgar respect stemming from an inferiority complex and a lack of identity. In all probability, the civil servant has something to gain from the respect shown to such people. Yet since this is an important value judgment, the civil servant necessarily feels respect for the wealthy person—respect that may be described as a mixture of envy and admiration. The vulgar, self-interested Ignorantist character can be seen here very plainly.

Adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant regard all this as perfectly normal and ordinary, in the same way that fish are unaware of the water around them. Ignorantists are not aware how unreasoning, vulgar and hollow are their attitudes and behavior. Neither are they as aware as they should be that Allah has created them, that they are in this world to be tested and for only a short time, and that eventually they will return to our Lord and account for themselves to Him. Instead of considering these things, giving thanks to Allah and seeking His approval, they spend their entire lives on simple quarrels and cultivating simple interests. They work for years in a tiny office, seek to increase their salaries and position, invent gossip about others, experience crises of envy, live in a state of stress and pretense the whole time. However, since they ignore the approval of Allah and forget about the Hereafter, everything they do is hollow and meaningless. As revealed in the verse, **"Humanity's reckoning**

has drawn very close to them, yet they heedlessly turn away" (Surat al-Anbiya', 1), they are totally heedless and are described in the Qur'an as those **"who play at frivolous games"** (Surat at-Tur, 12).

Putting down people who need to have things done, those without money, the ugly or younger people is a general rule in the Religion of the Ignorant. Attitudes are determined according to the client's type and appearance in those workplaces in direct contact with customers. The client is treated politely and with interest if he or she appears to be wealthy. But if not, then a superior and uncaring attitude is displayed, along with a desire to be rid of the person. In this way, the general attitude in stores, shops and boutiques is determined.

Every profession has its own customs and ethics. But these moral values can be broadened, narrowed or altered according to the value of the goods in question, the wealth of the client, or the nature of the work. Making someone believe that an outfit suits them when it doesn't, selling a low-quality item as if it were a high-quality one, or making people think that an expensive item is actually very affordable requires *professionalism*, as the Ignorantism terms it. That, in any case, is the work ethic of the Religion of the Ignorant. It is known as the "work" ethic because it is very different from the moral values of the Qur'an. That ethic encourages sin to be committed secretly:

- Under Ignorantism, blatant theft is a violation of the Religion of the Ignorant. But obtaining unfair advantage for oneself under a legitimate guise by cutting the job to suit one's cloth is a rule of that religion.

- Openly taking bribes is forbidden. But bribes under the guise of gifts are accepted.

- Murder is a grave crime, but not lifting a finger as someone

dies, in order to avoid finding oneself in difficulties, is intelligent behavior.

- It is bad form to insult or swear at people to their face, but backbiting and gossiping behind their back is normal.

- Atheism is bad, but being *too* religious is also unacceptable.

In addition, Ignorantism has produced a conception of Islam according to its own lights. According to that concept, and in contrast to the Qur'an, it is legitimate for someone to perform only those religious duties that suit him, in a manner appropriate to the time and place. Yet living the life described by Allah and abiding by all the laws of Islam is regarded as excessive and is regarded as not right. The Religion of the Ignorant has produced its own conception of Islam, based on its own logic.

THE CONCEPTION OF ISLAM IN IGNORANTISM

The concept of religion is exceedingly misunderstood in many countries today. There is an enormous difference between the religious moral values revealed by Allah in the Qur'an and those perceived by society.

The most obvious indication is the way that besides referring to people's religion, one may also speak of their world view, ideology, philosophy of life or lifestyle. According to this logic, a person may be a member of any religion—a Muslim, for example—but there is no contradiction in their also adopting a philosophy of life or world view that is outside Islam. Being Muslims is concerned with their beliefs, but there are also the *facts of life*.

By far the greater part of the members of the Religion of the Ignorant do not openly deny the true religion. On the contrary, they all claim to be good Muslims, but they do not much appreciate certain rules of Islam according to their unhealthy mindset, and claim these need to be changed. They accept those aspects of the religion that do not run contrary to their own interests. While doing so, they still maintain that they are good Muslims. The fact is, though, that what they're doing does not represent the sincere features described in the Qur'an. In one sense, they are engaged in disbelief.

This situation is described in the Qur'an with this example:

... Do you, then, believe in one part of the Book and reject

the other? What repayment will there be for any of you who do that except disgrace in this world? And on the Day of Resurrection, they will be returned to the harshest of punishments. Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Surat al-Baqara, 85)

Here we need to accurately determine why members of the Religion of the Ignorant accept Islam only partially, and why this is so characteristic of unbelievers. Someone turns to Islam and lives by it because of his or her acceptance of Allah and submission to Him. If Islam is adopted for other reasons, then that cannot be true faith. The hypocrites—a human community mentioned in the Qur'an—is the best example of this. They appear to have accepted Islam and live the same way that Muslims live, but their aim is not to obtain Allah's approval but to put on a show for others. They calculate that by accepting Islam, they will obtain a better status and achieve certain advantages. These people are described thus in the Qur'an:

Among the people there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. They think they deceive Allah and those who believe. They deceive no one but themselves but they are not aware of it. (Surat al-Baqara, 8-9)

The hypocrites are an example of why adopting Islam for any other reason than Allah's approval is worthless. In any case, these people do not practice all the stipulations of Islam, avoiding those observances that involve making sacrifices.

Ignorantists are in a similar position. They have accepted Islam not because they believe in Allah and seek His approval. Their reason for their accepting Islam is the logic of abiding by one's forefathers, one of the basic characteristics of the unbelievers. They regard their ancestors as guides. Their real religion is that handed down

from them. They accept Islam since they regard it as a part of that tradition. In addition, they also accept many non-Islamic teachings inherited from their forefathers and accept only those aspects of Islam that do not conflict with their own interests. This shows that they do not possess sincere faith. They regard Islam as a cultural, traditional component of the nation they say they belong to.

Since they regard Islam as a tradition, they also have no fear of Allah, the very basis of Islam. The religious expressions they use are generally the same as those in the Qur'an. They refer to Allah, faith, Paradise and Hell, fasting, and the need to pray five times a day. Yet since they fail to approach these with the sensitive conscience that fear of Allah brings with it, they are unaffected. In the description of believers in the Qur'an, it is revealed that they are most sensitive to remembering Allah and His verses:

The believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, whose faith is increased when His signs are recited to them, and who put their trust in their Lord. (Surat al-Anfal, 2)

In contrast, members of the Religion of the Ignorant are unaffected by remembering Allah, in other words they have no awe of Him. They attest to Allah and the Hereafter only in words, and their hearts are entirely empty. They do not live by the moral values of the Qur'an. These characteristics are emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an:

Say: "To whom does the Earth belong, and everyone in it, if you have any knowledge?" They will say: "To Allah." Say: "So will you not pay heed?" Say: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?" They will say: "Allah." Say: "So will you not pay heed?" Say: "In Whose hand is the dominion over everything, He Who

gives protection and from Whom no protection can be given, if you have any knowledge?" They will say: "Allah's." Say: "So how have you been bewitched?" The fact is that We have given them the truth and they are liars. (Surat al-Muminun, 84-90)

If you ask them, "Who sends down water from the sky, bringing the earth back to life again after it was dead?" they will say, "Allah." Say: "Praise be to Allah." But most of them do not use their intellect. (Surat al-'Ankabut, 63)

Adherents of Ignorantism are unaffected by the existence of Allah and are easily able to carry on living in violation of His commandments because they lack the reason with which to comprehend the meaning of what they attest to. They affirm the existence of Allah in words because belief in Allah in the tradition has come down to them from their forebears. They have certainly not thought in a conscious manner or displayed the behavior of a believer, who are described in the verse as:

those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the Earth: "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire." (Surah Al 'Imran, 191)

It is revealed in the Qur'an that such people lack the means for such thought because they are devoid of reason:

Do you suppose that most of them hear or understand? They are just like cattle. Indeed they are even more astray! (Surat al-Furqan, 44)

With this conception of Islam, which is devoid of true faith, the Religion of the Ignorant has developed a most distorted model of religion, in which there are specific days and times for worshipping

Allah. Special care is taken for religious formalities at these times to be observed. It is believed, for instance, that despite having spent the whole year without observing Allah's commandments and prohibitions, it is sufficient to go to prayer on the morning of a religious festival. They have a superstitious idea that they will be forgiven by fulfilling their obligations to Allah on that day alone. Of course, it is a good thing for a person to pray, by whatever means that comes about. However, it is revealed in the Qur'an that believers pray scrupulously five times a day, in fear and awe of Allah. A prayer performed solely as a tradition to conform to others may not be acceptable. Many who live by Ignorantism say they cannot find time for prayer due to the pressure of worldly affairs, and this is left to such specific days. However, the intention behind their prayers is rather different from that of the prayers of believers: Instead of begging for greater fear of Allah and for the continuation of their observances and faith, they beg Him only to remedy their difficulties, to be able to buy a better car, or to be able to marry the boy or girl they love. Whenever they land in trouble—for example, when they are seriously ill or facing a major problem—they pray to Allah, but forget Him again when that problem is resolved, and again begin ascribing partners to Him. This state of mind has been revealed in the Qur'an:

Any blessing you have is from Allah. Then when harm touches you, it is to Him you cry for help. But when He removes the harm from you, a group of you associate others with their Lord, ungrateful for what We have given them. Enjoy yourselves. You will soon know! (Surat an-Nahl, 53-55)

The members of the Religion of the Ignorant try to adapt the logic of profitable trading, which they have gained in their business dealings, to Islam. They persistently flout the rules of the religion,

then ask for forgiveness on certain days and nights. The holy nights are an opportunity not to be missed, since it is thought that prayers sincerely offered on those nights will be answered. On those nights, going from mosque to mosque if possible and giving the impression this is a holy tour is common behavior. Some people who attend mosque on Fridays alone imagine that they are devout. It will be useful to recall one point at this stage.

Holy nights, festival prayers are important occasions for all Muslims. It is important to perform one's religious observances on these days. Many people's hearts are softened at such times, and they seem more eager to display proper moral values. For Muslims, however, other days are just as beautiful and valuable. Every day and every hour are important for the believer to keep Allah in mind, seek His forgiveness and be close to Him.

For members of Ignorantism, on the other hand, it is important that religious observances be carried out visibly. For that reason, they are most scrupulous when they must perform their prayers in a group setting, even though they do not perform them at all when they are alone. Although they should perform their prayers because they fear Allah and hope for His mercy, actually they perform them because they seek others' approval. Allah says the following in the Qur'an about those who perform their observances for purposes of show:

So woe to those who perform prayer, and are forgetful of their prayer, those who show off. (Surat al-Ma'un, 4-6)

As we have seen, the most distinct aspect of the Religion of the Ignorant is that despite being totally at odds with the essence of Islam and the Qur'an, most of its adherents imagine themselves to be true believers. That is because Ignorantism—in contrast to the Qur'an—sets out in detail the kind of religious conception a person

will have and what they will practice, the kind of belief in Allah they will possess, and what their ethical conception must be. The beliefs and observances of this religion are totally different from those of a true believer. Indeed, in many regards they are the exact opposite.

Some of the major deceptions of the Religion of the Ignorant is making people believe they are Muslim, while adopting a religion that is actually far removed from Islam. Those who adopt the rules, beliefs and ethics of Ignorantism are even unaware that this is their actual religion. Such people live by a false religion adorned and set in front of them in accordance with their passions and weaknesses by satan—but they are completely unaware of the fact.

This religion has a perspective that feels no proper fear of Allah but accepts His existence, according to its own preconditions. Allah's title of the Creator is accepted, but with a prevailing belief that He has control over His creations only under particular circumstances. (Surely Allah is beyond that!) It is Allah Who will save a person in an instant or cure them of a hopeless disease, and He will determine the moment of their death. Beyond that, however, Allah's control over and intervention in daily life, the stock exchange, technology, scientific research, trade and politics are denied. It is believed that here, it is human power, reason and intervention that apply. Allah is regarded as a deity who created only various natural phenomena, as was the case in primitive beliefs. (Surely Allah is beyond that!) According to that mentality, it is He Who causes the wind to blow, storms to arise and earthquakes to strike. But it is infinite human knowledge that makes jet planes, spacecraft, and nuclear power stations!

According to this belief system, there are certain places where Allah observes human beings. When performing such observances as fasting or praying, one is in the sight of Allah. But it is believed

that apart from that, there are times when Allah does not see or hear. (Surely Allah is beyond that!) There is therefore a superstitious idea that falsehoods, gossip and the like can be hidden from Allah. The erroneous nature of this belief is revealed in the Qur'an:

The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it. There is no seed in the darkness of the Earth, and nothing moist or dry which is not in a Clear Book. (Surat al-An'am, 59)

[He is] the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible, the Most Great, the High-Exalted. It makes no difference whether you keep secret what you say or voice it out loud, whether you hide in the night or go out in the day. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 9-10)

Another verse describes the error of adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant thus:

Or do they imagine that We do not hear their secrets and their private talk? On the contrary Our messengers are right there with them writing it down! (Surat az-Zukhruf, 80)

Since members of Ignorantism do not fear Allah as they ought, they distort the concepts of religion in ways appropriate to their own interests. Instead of the one described in the Qur'an, they produce a distorted concept of being a Muslim. For example, statements such as "I pray every now and then when I get the chance. I do no harm to anyone. I am not a murderer or a thief. I read, I have a good job, I am successful. Why should I go to Hell?" have no place in Islam, but can frequently be heard uttered by adherents of the Religion of the Ignorant. These people think that being a Muslim consists of not wronging anyone. They fail to understand that the foundation of the religion is unconditional obedience to Allah, and

are deceiving themselves. These people think that the religion of Allah consists of giving small amounts of money to beggars or getting on well with their neighbors, and seek to ignore hundreds of the stipulations of the Qur'an. Sometimes they try to offer allegedly logical explanations for this insincerity. On the subject of some stipulations in the Qur'an, they try to avoid their religious observances by means of distorted logic, along the lines of "The pace of life is very fast, so I have no time for prayer," or "People nowadays are different and have to make necessary concessions regarding honesty, humility and compassion." These people, who put forward willful misinterpretations of the verses of the Qur'an are in the following position:

Say: "Do you presume to teach Allah your religion when Allah knows everything in the heavens and everything in the earth? Allah has knowledge of all things." (Surat al-Hujurat, 16)

Neither do members of Ignorantism possess a true belief in the Hereafter. As with many provisions of the religion, they accept the Hereafter in words, but do not truly believe in it. They regard the Hereafter as a myth they heard from their forefathers, and as a remote possibility. Nonetheless, they still hope that according to their ill mind "if there is a Hereafter," (!) then Allah will forgive them and send them to Paradise. In the Qur'an, however, the final end awaiting such people is described thus:

Man never tires of praying for the good and if evil touches him, he despairs and loses hope. But if We let him taste mercy from Us after he has suffered hardship, then he says, "This is my due. I do not think that the Hour is going to come. And if I am returned to my Lord, I will definitely find the best reward with Him." But We will inform those

who disbelieve of what they did and make them suffer a ruthless punishment. (Surah Fussilat, 49-50)

One group in the Religion of the Ignorant regard themselves as justified in committing all kinds of sin and unlawful actions with the idea, spread from person to person, that they will enter Paradise after spending a while in Hell. After spending a period of time suffering discomfort in Hell, they imagine they are guaranteed to enter Paradise. In fact, this is a superstitious belief and another example of human beings deceiving themselves. The Qur'an makes the following reference on this subject:

That is because they say, "The Fire will only touch us for a number of days." Their inventions have deluded them in their religion. But how will it be when We gather them all together for a Day about which there is no doubt? Every self will be paid in full for what it earned. They will not be wronged. (Surah Al 'Imran, 24-25)

Another verse refers to this superstitious belief in these terms: **They say, "The Fire will only touch us for a number of days." Say, "Have you made a contract with Allah—then Allah will not break His contract—or are you rather saying about Allah what you do not know?" (Surat al-Baqara, 80)**

Yet the position is not like they imagine. In the very next verse, the situation in the Hereafter is reported as follows:

No indeed! Those who accumulate bad actions and are surrounded by their mistakes, such people are the Companions of the Fire, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. (Surat al-Baqara, 81)

The reason why adherents of Ignorantism and all unbelievers in general are able to behave so easily and unconcernedly on the subject of the torments of Hell and regard themselves as definitely

bound for Paradise stems from the fact that their belief in Allah and the Hereafter is weak. Believers, on the other hand, are very sensitive on this subject and never regard themselves as inevitably destined for Paradise. On the contrary, they constantly pray to Allah to forgive their sins and for their hearts to remain true. Examples of this are such prayers as:

"Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve aside after You have guided us. And give us mercy from You. You are the Ever-Giving." (Surah Al 'Imran, 8)

The Prophet Yusuf (as) also prayed in the words:

"My Lord, You have granted power to me on earth and taught me the true meaning of events. Originator of the heavens and Earth, You are my Friend in this world and the Next. So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous." (Surah Yusuf, 101)

In short, believers definitely do not regard themselves as perfect, flawless human beings destined for Paradise. On the contrary, they try to do all they can to remedy their deficiencies, correct their mistakes and mature in faith. For that reason, as is revealed in many verses of the Qur'an, they pay the greatest attention to warnings issued to them. Since members of the Religion of the Ignorant are very fond of themselves and regard themselves as flawless, they never listen to any advice. When called to the book of Allah, they turn away and gloss over the subject by maintaining that they are in any case exemplary Muslims. They close all conversations by saying, "Alhamdulillah, I am a Muslim, too." The situation of such people is revealed thus in one verse:

Who could do greater wrong than someone who is reminded of the signs of his Lord and then turns away from them, forgetting all that he has done before? We have

placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Though you call them to guidance, they will nonetheless never be guided. (Surat al-Kahf, 57)

They even make statements intended to exonerate themselves, along the lines of "I come from a very religious family," or "My grandfather was an esteemed scholar on the subject of religion whose opinions were sought, a hadji, an imam." Or else they bring up a good deed they once performed, such as a large amount of money they gave to a poor person, and hint at how saintly (!) they are. Such people are referred to in these terms in the Qur'an:

Do you not see those who claim to be purified? No, Allah purifies whoever He wills. They will not be wronged by so much as the smallest speck. Look how they invent lies against Allah. That suffices as an outright felony. (Surat an-Nisa', 49-50)

Adherents of Ignorantism produce various religious observances of their own, according to their own lights, and imagine that by performing these they will go to Paradise. One can often hear the statement, "Work is a religious observance" from the lips of such people. Starting from that logic, they then say that their own professions are religious observances. According to this logic, since they serve the religion by means of their jobs, there is no need to abide by the provisions of the Qur'an. The person saying this may be a civil servant, a barber, a doctor, a tradesman or a tailor. They all imagine that they help people through their jobs, and that this is the greatest form of religious observance. Yet this is a great error.

These people have chosen the job that will bring them the most money, the best lifestyle and the most fame, but then they claim that they give the religion their service through that job. Religious obser-

vance means serving Allah. Helping others is a religious observance only if done for the sake of Allah's approval. A person cannot fail to abide by the moral values of the Qur'an and then say, "I helped such-and-such a person. That is a religious observance." If they wish to perform a religious observance—in other words to serve Allah—then they must try to fulfill all the provisions He set.

Some verses in Surat at-Tawba explain this in the finest manner. These verses refer to the custom of the polytheists in Mecca of giving water to those people coming to repair the Kaaba or coming to it on pilgrimage. It is revealed that this action by the polytheists is not regarded as a religious observance, despite being a positive deed. That is because, as already stated, religious observance means serving Allah. Yet the polytheists performed that action not for the approval of Allah, but for show, and as a requirement of tradition and custom:

It is not for the idolaters to maintain the mosques of Allah, bearing witness against themselves of their disbelief. They are the ones whose actions will come to nothing. They will be in the Fire timelessly, for ever. (Surat at-Tawba, 17)

Do you make the giving of water to the pilgrims and looking after the Sacred Mosque [Masjid al-Haram] the same as believing in Allah and the Last Day and striving in the way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah does not guide wrongdoing people. (Surat at-Tawba, 19)

There is no end to the varieties of distorted concepts of Islam produced by the Religion of the Ignorant. Some members of this religion are convinced of the correctness of the path they follow and express their confidence with such statements as "If Allah did not love me, would He have given me this house, family, assets and property?" In seeking to justify themselves with such thoughts, they

are unaware that they may fall within the provisions of the following verse:

Do they imagine that, in the wealth and children We extend to them, We are hastening to them with good things? No indeed, but they have no awareness! (Surat al-Muminun, 55-56)

Their true nature is described in another verse:

Do not let their wealth and children impress you. Allah merely wants to punish them by them during their life in this world and for them to expire while they are disbelievers. (Surat at-Tawba, 55)

Nobody has the right to regard themselves as so privileged. If a person obeys only Allah, abides by His commandments as much as he can, and seeks forgiveness from Allah for his sins, he may hope for happiness and salvation in the sight of Allah. It is tremendous hypocrisy for people who have knowingly turned their backs on His commandments and taken other deities for themselves to seek to portray themselves as saintly. Indeed, the Qur'an issues the following statement regarding those Jews who made a similar claim:

Say: "You Jews, if you claim to be the friends of Allah to the exclusion of all other people, then wish for death if you are telling the truth." But they will never ever wish for it because of what they have done. Allah knows the wrongdoers. (Surat al-Jumu'a, 6-7)

Religious observance, according to the conception of Islam of the members of Ignorantism, consists of words alone. They frequently refer to being of support to Muslims, living for Allah, praying five times a day and the need to read the Qur'an, but these tasks are not carried out. In any case, the limits of and to what extent one should live by the moral values of the Qur'an have been set out dif-

ferently in the Religion of the Ignorant to in the Qur'an. Such expressions as: "Religion is fine, but only up to a certain point. Everything has its limits. One must not go to extremes. Too much of anything is not good," can frequently be heard from the mouths of these people.

What they mean by "too much" religion is any sacrifice to be performed in its name. These people are scrupulous with not being known for being alongside Muslims, for not recalling the names of Allah with them, not engaging in any activity for the sake of Allah and for not using their property and assets on His path—or doing so only inasmuch as it does not conflict with their interests. Those who implement only those aspects of the religion that don't conflict with their own interests are described in these terms in the Qur'an:

Among the people there is one who worships Allah right on the edge. If good befalls him, he is content with it, but if a trial befalls him, he reverts to his former ways, losing both this world and the Hereafter. That is indeed sheer loss. (Surat al-Hajj, 11)

The Islam described in the Qur'an, however, holds the approval and love of Allah above all personal interests, whose only expectation is the Hereafter, which requires serious and honest endeavor in His cause.

In Ignorantism, on the other hand, personal interests are usually held far above all kinds of belief, friendship and love. Members of the Religion of the Ignorant therefore fear to support the faithful openly. They do not openly live their beliefs for fear of losing prestige. They do not always defend what they know to be right. For them, the ideas of the society in which they live, their jobs, friends or property, are more important than Allah and His approval. The following provision is issued on this subject in the Qur'an:

Say: "If your fathers or your sons or your brothers or your wives or your tribe, or any wealth you have acquired, or any business you fear may slump, or any house which pleases you, are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way, then wait until Allah brings about His command. Allah does not guide people who are deviators." (Surat at-Tawba, 24)

The verse lists a number of basic value judgments elevated by Ignorantism and describes how esteeming these above the value judgments of Islam is a feature of a society that has rebelled against Allah. The erroneous conception of love in such societies is one such value judgment. In the Religion of the Ignorant love of society and human beings generally comes before love of Allah. The approval of others is regarded more highly than that of Allah. This is described in the Qur'an as *shirk*, in other words adopting deities other than Allah:

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah... (Surat al-Baqara, 165)

However, these people imagine that this consists solely of worshipping idols made of wood or plaster, and so regard themselves as being very distant from such behavior and never accept the word as applying to themselves. When told that the system they are a part of ascribes partners to Allah, they are indignant. Nevertheless, no matter how much those who ascribe partners to Allah seek to exonerate themselves, Allah's stipulation is irrefutable. The situation of the idolaters is revealed as follows in the Qur'an:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has gone very far astray. (Surat an-Nisa', 116)

The *book* of Ignorantism is the collection of rules consisting of the culture inherited from their forebears and the conditions prevailing at that time. For that reason, the Qur'an is not regarded as a guide. Their place for the Qur'an is wrapped up in a decorative cloth, placed as high up as possible. Nobody can touch it. This is a most important phenomenon, however, which means the Qur'an being kept as far removed as possible from people's lives by a cunning and devilish ruse. Allah elucidates this situation with the words of His messenger, who will complain of such people on the Day of Judgment:

The messenger says, "My Lord, my people treat this Qur'an as something to be ignored." (Surat al-Furqan, 30)

Afterwards, people live by the standards imposed by other false lords, such as principles of society, family traditions, the way they are brought up, second-hand religious knowledge, the words of their elders and the legacy of their ancestors. Yet Allah addresses those who adopt a system incompatible with the Qur'an and who nevertheless still imagine themselves to be Muslims thus:

What is the matter with you? On what basis do you judge? Or do you have a Book which you study, so that you may have anything in it you choose? Or do you have oaths which bind Us, extending to the Day of Resurrection, that you will have whatever you decide? (Surat al-Qalam, 36-39)

Instead of the religion chosen by Allah, members of the Religion of the Ignorant have adopted their own desires and passions, the culture inherited from their society which they take as their guide, and have thus turned away from the true path. They have thus exchanged the true religion, the most perfect and sole hope of salvation, sent down as a mercy from Allah, for the sake of a few and short-lived worldly benefits. The poor nature of this bar-

gain is revealed in the Qur'an:

Those are the people who trade the Hereafter for this world. The punishment will not be lightened for them. They will not be helped. (Surat al-Baqara, 86)

Those are the people who have sold guidance for misguidance. Their trade has brought no profit; they are not guided. (Surat al-Baqara, 16)

Distancing Oneself from False Religion

The fundamental quality of someone who enters the religion of Allah (Islam) is that they adopt Allah as their only Lord. Since they have adopted Him as their Lord, they cannot accept any other entity as a guide. They will regulate their entire lives in the manner revealed by Allah, in other words by His book, the Qur'an which "... **contains guidance for those who guard against evil**" (Surat al-Baqara, 2). That being the case, there can be no question of them adopting any other ethical system.

Someone who has faith, therefore, cannot be bound to a moral system that is the exact opposite of that of the Qur'an. One cannot be both a Muslim and also follow non-religious traditions inherited from one's forebears. One cannot produce one's own philosophy of life. A believer is solely a Muslim, and can bear no other name. Allah gives him or her that name. The Qur'an reveals the following on this subject:

Strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has selected you and not placed any constraint upon you in the religion—the religion of your forefather Ibrahim. He named you Muslims before and also in this, so that the messenger could be witness against you and you could be witnesses against all mankind. So perform prayer and give

the alms and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector—the Best Protector, the Best Helper. (Surat al-Hajj, 78)

Various Surahs in the Qur'an refer to believers who have totally divorced themselves from the false religion of the society of which they are a part and who have unreservedly turned to the religion of Allah. One such are the Companions of the Cave, who were faced with death because they refused to accept the superstitious religion of their society and who sheltered in a cave for safety. The situation of the Companions of the Cave is described in these terms in the Qur'an:

Do you consider that the Companions of the Cave and Ar-Raqim were one of the most remarkable of Our signs? (Surat al-Kahf, 9)

We will relate their story to you with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance. We fortified their hearts when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the Earth and We will not call on any god apart from Him. We would in that case have uttered an abomination. These people of ours have taken gods apart from Him. Why do they not produce a clear authority concerning them? Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents a lie against Allah? When you have separated yourselves from them and everything they worship except Allah, take refuge in the cave and your Lord will unfold His mercy to you and open the way to the best for you in your situation." (Surat al-Kahf, 13-16)

As can be seen from these verses, a believer who surrenders to Allah must fully distance himself and turn away from adherents of false religion. This does not inevitably mean a physical separation.

(The Companions of the Cave entered the cave physically because of the attack from their opponents.) Believers must distance themselves from members of the false religion, primarily in mental terms.

The Prophet Yusuf (as) is an instance of this. At a time when he had been thrown into a dungeon because of a slander made against him in Egypt he mentally distanced himself from the unbelievers. This is how he spoke to those who asked him questions in the dungeon:

"... I have left the religion of a people who clearly have no faith in Allah and who refuse to acknowledge the truth of the world to come. I hold fast to the creed of my forebears Ibrahim and Ishaq and Ya'qub. We don't associate anything with Allah. And that is how Allah has favored us and all mankind, but most do not give thanks. My fellow-prisoners, are many lords better, or Allah, the only One, the Conqueror? What you serve apart from Him are only names which you and your forefathers have made up. There is no mandate for them from Allah. Allah alone is qualified to judge. His order is to worship none but Him. That is in truth the straight and upright religion, but most of mankind simply do not know." (Surah Yusuf, 37-40)

In another verse, the example is cited of how the Prophet Ibrahim (as) and those around him distanced themselves from the community that adhered to false religion:

You have an excellent example in Ibrahim and those with him, when they said to their people, "We wash our hands of you and all that you worship apart from Allah, and we reject you. Between us and you there will be enmity and hatred for ever unless and until you believe in Allah alone..." (Surat al-Mumtahana, 4)

Surat al-Kafirun is another expression of the gulf between believers and adherents of false religion:

Say: "Unbelievers! I do not worship what you worship and you do not worship what I worship. Nor will I worship what you worship nor will you worship what I worship. You have your religion and I have my religion." (Surat al-Kafirun, 1-6)

The believer must construct the gulf separating him from members of false religion with the greatest scrupulousness. Not a single aspect of the religion of the unbelievers, no value judgments, ethical rules, models of behavior, or forms of dialogue must be adopted and practiced by believers. The believer is charged with exhibiting the behavior described in the Qur'an, not that in false religion. The gait and even tone of voice most befitting the nobility, moral values and belief of the faithful is described in the Qur'an. Allah proclaims in verses:

Do not avert your face from people out of haughtiness and do not strut about arrogantly on the earth. Allah does not love anyone who is vain or boastful. Be moderate in your tread and lower your voice. The most hateful of voices is the donkey's bray. (Surah Luqman, 18-19)

False religions vary greatly among themselves, and very few, like Marxism, openly state that they deny Allah. On the other hand, according to what we learn from the Qur'an, a great many members of false religions say that they believe in and obey Allah. Yet theirs is an insincere claim and has nothing to do with the truth. The lives they lead and the ethical concepts they adopt are totally incompatible with that claim. An example is given in the Qur'an of such claims made by adherents of false religions:

Indeed is the sincere religion not Allah's alone? People

who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Allah will judge between them regarding the things about which they differed. Allah does not guide anyone who is an ungrateful liar. (Surat az-Zumar, 3)

Other verses reveal that when asked, members of false religions state that they believe in the existence and might of Allah. But they are unable to fully comprehend this truth, which they accept solely in the form of words, and do not actually fear Him:

Say: "Who provides for you out of heaven and Earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the whole affair?" They will say, "Allah." Say, "So will you not guard against evil?" That is Allah, your Lord, the Truth, and what is there after truth except misguidance? So how have you been distracted? In that way the Word of your Lord is realized against those who are deviators, in that they do not believe. (Surah Yunus, 31-33)

If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the Earth and made the sun and moon subservient?" they will say, "Allah." So how have they been perverted? (Surat al-'Ankabut, 61)

One therefore needs to be careful when identifying false religions. Adherents of these religions may accept only those parts of the Qur'an that do not conflict with their own interests. As stated earlier, however, what they accept is only a part of the Qur'an, and according to Allah's stipulations, believing in one part of the Qur'an while denying another is still denial:

...Do you, then, believe in one part of the Book and reject the other? What repayment will there be for any of you who

do that except disgrace in this world? And on the Day of Resurrection, they will be returned to the harshest of punishments. Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Surat al-Baqara, 85)

In another verse Allah addresses believers thus:

...Today those who disbelieve have despaired of overcoming your religion. So do not be afraid of them but be afraid of Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My blessing upon you and I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you... (Surat al-Ma'ida, 3)

Allah has chosen Islam for us as our religion. That is the only true path, and every other path, every religion, is false. We all have a duty to learn from Allah's religion how to think, how to behave, how to speak and how to live.

It is the duty of every Muslim, therefore, to evaluate the situation confronting him according to the criteria of the Qur'an, and to behave accordingly. If the members of the society of which we are a part have adopted one another or their forebears as their Lord rather than Allah; if they have adopted other sources as their guide rather than His book; then they have forgotten Allah and turned their back on His commandments.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this book, various significant aspects of the Religion of the Ignorant that appear in our society have been examined. However, Ignorantism does not belong solely to our own time and society. On the contrary, this is the common religion of societies in all times and places that have turned away from the true religion. The only differences lie in terms of external form. Although the customs of society and models of behavior change according to time and place, the basic logic remains the same. Putting on a show, for instance—one of the main features of the Religion of the Ignorant—may take place in different forms in different societies. The expressions and gestures that reflect arrogance and self-love may assume different forms. But at the end of the day, the fundamental logic is still the same.

This logic, as emphasized right from the outset, is the result of the Ignorantists having forgotten Allah. In the words of the Prophet Shu'ayb (as), they **"... have made Him into something to cast disdainfully behind [their] backs!"** (Surah Hud, 92). Members of this religion are unaware that they have come into this world in order to serve Allah, and that His mercy is their only salvation. Yet it is Allah Who created us, gave us form and appearance in our mothers' wombs, brought us into the world, prepared that world for us, has mercy upon us, causes us to live and will eventually cause us to die. We have no other guardian, Lord, or deity than Him. We came from

Him and shall return to Him. We shall not remain long in this world.

Since this is the fundamental essence of our existence, then it is most unwise to engage in petty calculations of interest in this world, where we shall remain for only a brief time, to show off to one another, to thirst after goods and property that are condemned to vanish, and to choose other guides, other aims and other causes than those in the religion of Allah. The world has been created as the vineyard of the Hereafter. We can attain the mercy and Paradise of Allah in the Hereafter and live a peaceful life in this world only by following His path and holding fast to Allah. That is indeed what we are commanded:

...hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector—the Best Protector, the Best Helper. (Surat al-Hajj, 78)

Everything examined throughout this book reveals the distorted thinking, perspective, customs and behavior produced by the Religion of the Ignorant. When its features are compared to the true religion described in the Qur'an, the enormous gulf between the two can clearly be seen. That difference is the difference between faith and denial. To put it another way, it is the difference between the religion of Allah and the false religion produced by satan. Therefore, there can be no question of any similarity between Ignorantism and Islam, or of Muslims adopting any part of the former. For that reason, the believer can immediately be distinguished from the Ignorantist society. Members of that society soon realize that the believer is not one of them. Yet they cannot comprehend how the believers' character could be so opposite to their own religion. The logic of the believer is the antithesis of theirs. That is in any case why throughout history, adherents of Ignorantism have been unable to understand the believers and have accused them of *madness*.

However, the system to which they belong has no consistent,

logical foundations. The words they speak are generally contradictory. They speak of the need to adhere to Islam, but then place restrictions upon it. They like some provisions of the religion, but are in favor of other provisions not being implemented, saying that there is no need to go to extremes. They say, "We are Muslims," but add that they don't wish to live by Islam.

As can be seen from these contradictory words, the illogical interpretations, ideas and thoughts of any member of the Religion of the Ignorant totally contradict the verses of the Qur'an. Such people are referred to in the Qur'an:

Among people there is one who argues about Allah without knowledge or guidance or any light-giving Book, turning away arrogantly, to misguide people from the way of Allah. He will be disgraced in this world and on the Day of Resurrection, We will make him taste the punishment of the Burning. (Surat al-Hajj, 8-9)

Such clarity of consciousness and reason are required in order to comprehend the true religion that these can be possessed only by believers. In several verses, Allah has revealed that unbelievers and idolaters are people whose minds and perceptions remain closed:

Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara, 7)

We created many of the jinn and humanity for Hell. They have hearts they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf, 179)

... Allah has turned their hearts away because they are people who do not understand. (Surat at-Tawba, 127)

Ignorantism is therefore the religion of the irrational and the unaware. Yet reason and conscience should lead them to live by religious moral values, for the true glory, honor and eternal happiness of mankind lie in Islam.

The choice between the two religions lies with the individual, as is explained in a verse:

**There is no compulsion where the religion is concerned.
Right guidance has become clearly distinct from error.
Anyone who rejects false gods and believes in Allah has
grasped the Firmest Handhold, which will never give way.
Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara, 256)**

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of miraculous order in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the fact of creation to account for the origin of life.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works,

and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.
- 2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but

were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.²

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmos-

phere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.³

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁴

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

*Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?*⁵

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids.

In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.⁶

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mech-

anisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means of Natural Selection...*

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁷

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks

were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁸

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930s. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., ears, eyes, lungs, and wings) underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The American geneticist B. G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in

the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.⁹

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in

the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

If such animals ever really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*¹⁰

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find—over and over again—not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*¹¹

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹²

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the Earth. That means that "the origin of species," contrary to Darwin's supposition, is not evolution, but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. *Australopithecus*
2. *Homo habilis*
3. *Homo erectus*

4. *Homo sapiens*

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹³

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁴

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁶

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. Stephen Jay Gould explained this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he was himself one of the leading advocates of evolution in the twentieth century:

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*¹⁷

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "upheld" with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpre-

*tation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible—and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.*¹⁸

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Darwinian Formula!

Besides all the technical evidence we have dealt with so far, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

The theory of evolution asserts that life is formed by chance. According to this claim, lifeless and unconscious atoms came together to form the cell and then they somehow formed other living things, including man. Let us think about that. When we bring together the elements that are the building-blocks of life such as carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, only a heap is formed. No matter what treatments it undergoes, this atomic heap cannot form even a single living being. If you like, let us formulate an "experiment" on this subject and let us examine on the behalf of evolutionists what they really claim without pronouncing loudly under the name "Darwinian formula":

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids and as many proteins—a single one of which has

a formation probability of 10^{-950} —as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with Allah's superior creation.

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of evolutionists discloses this reality, just as in the above example.

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, colored, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all of its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear, the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them, and the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to

symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness That Sees and Hears Within the Brain Belong?

Who watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty Allah, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how

many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward to explain the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹⁹

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to

reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution: The Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically, and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba

worshipping the Sun, the tribe of Prophet Ibrahim (as) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of Prophet Musa (as) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, Allah has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verses, He reveals that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara, 6-7)

... They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A`raf: 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say: "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr, 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organiza-

tion, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Musa (as) and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Prophet Musa (as) to meet with his own magicians. When Musa (as) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A`raf, 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa (as) and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as the verse puts it:

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A`raf, 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm

Muggeridge, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms:

*I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.*²⁰

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

*They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara, 32)*

Notes

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